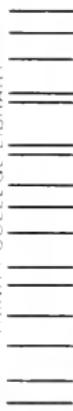
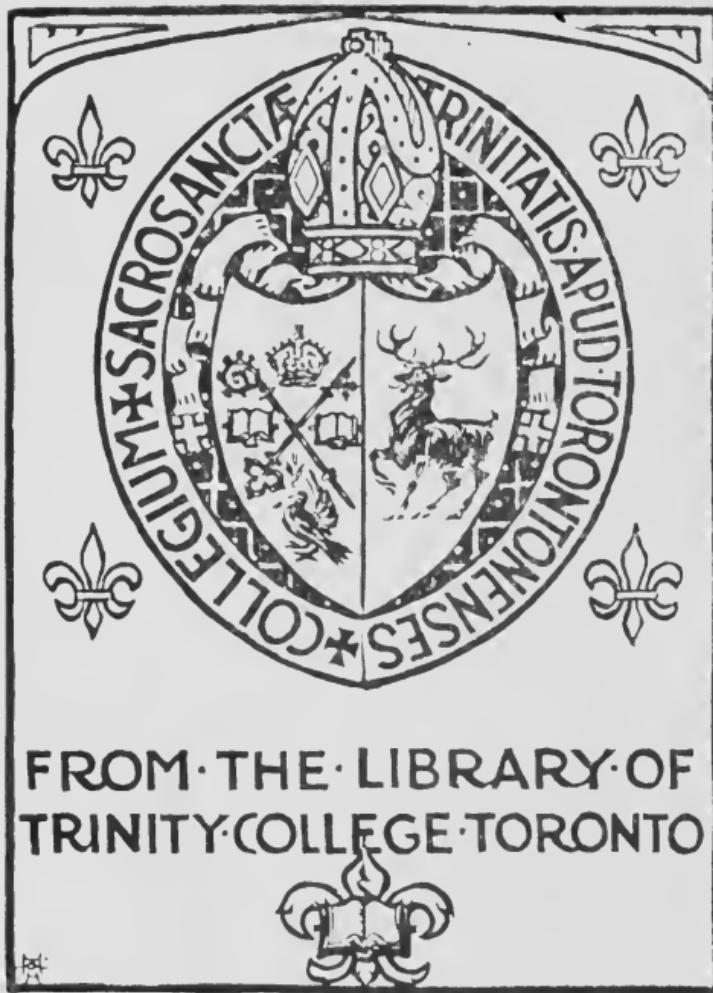


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KANT'S ETHICS.

A CRITICAL EXPOSITION.

By NOAH PORTER,

PRESIDENT OF YALE COLLEGE.

CHICAGO:
S. C. GRIGGS AND COMPANY,
1886.

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TO

PRESIDENT MARK HOPKINS, D.D., LL.D.,

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS EMINENT SERVICES TO

ETHICAL SCIENCE,

AND

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

PREFACE.

THE essay now given to the public has been promised for several months, but was written for the most part as a vacation exercise during the last summer. Its theme is Kant's *Theory of Ethics*, as contrasted with his practical teachings, so far as the former is distinctive of his school. For this reason it is chiefly concerned with the two treatises in which this theory is explained and defended, viz.: *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1785; *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*, 1788.

As its title imports, this treatise is both expository and critical. In expounding Kant's ethical theory to English readers, the writer has thought it best to state this theory very largely in Kant's own language, with such comments as might be required to make it intelligible. He has done this for two reasons, that he might be entirely just to Kant himself, and that he might aid the unpractised student in the somewhat discouraging task of interpreting the German philosopher. For both these reasons he has

often retained Kant's peculiar and frequently highly technical phraseology in order that, by mere repetition, it might become familiar, while yet he has sought to give its meaning in current English, that the student might acquire facility in interpreting the Kantian dialect by its English equivalents. He does not assert that in every case he has been successful in the last-named attempt. The English text, which he has invariably used, is that of the generally approved translation of Professor Abbott, of Trinity College, Dublin.*

The critical remarks of the author are usually given as a running commentary upon the text with the important exception of §§ 21-33, in which the exposition covers §§ 21-26 and the criticism §§ 27-33. These comments suppose some familiarity with ethical theories, and the criticisms and schools to which they have given rise, although the writer has scrupulously avoided all personal and partisan references, and endeavored to confine himself to his appropriate functions as the expounder and critic of his author.

Besides the expository and critical matter thus

* Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* and other works on the Theory of Ethics. Translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, M. A., etc. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1879.

described the reader will find a brief general introduction, together with a summary or condensed review of the distinctive positions taken by Kant upon the most important topics as compared with those of other—principally English—writers, and some brief strictures upon Kant by a few German critics.

The preparation of this essay has cost the writer some labor, but the labor has brought its own reward. He trusts that the result will be useful as an aid to those students who are interested in the study of ethical theories, and who appreciate the practical significance of such theories at the present time.

N. P.

YALE COLLEGE, Dec. 1, 1885.

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INTRODUCTORY.

§ 1. The title of this treatise describes its purpose. It proposes, first to interpret and then to criticise the principal features of Kant's ethical system. It proposes the ^{Plan and Reasons for the Treatise.} one in order to effect the other. This method is appropriate to the examination of every philosophical writer and every philosophical system; and so emphatically, that a skilful interpretation is often of itself the most satisfactory criticism, as it is always the most effective preparation for the same. This is preëminently true of every division of the Kantian philosophy, of those even which seem to be the least speculative. It might seem at first thought that the Kantian Ethics, like ethics in general or the principles of any individual ethical system, must be so far independent of any special metaphysical theories as to involve no special difficulty of either interpretation or criticism. This is only true of a few of Kant's leading positions, when interpreted in their practical spirit and enforced with

a certain imaginative fervor. On the other hand, it is most obvious that whatever is especially and characteristically Kantian in the Ethics is either founded on the Kantian Metaphysics, or else is applied in its service. Not unfrequently Kant's ethical positions seem to be assumed, almost to be devised, either to support or to supplement some cardinal point in his philosophy. Whatever in the Ethics is peculiar in scientific form or principle, in terminology or logical coherence, will be found to be ultimately connected with the Kantian Metaphysics. It follows that the student will find it impossible to understand or to criticise the Ethics of Kant unless he constantly keeps in mind or often refers to the leading principles of his philosophy, either as furnishing the foundations on which the Ethics rest or as responsible for the defects which they seek to supplement. Unless we are greatly mistaken, his ethical system is made to fulfil both functions, paradoxical as this may seem, being used at one time as the foundation and at another as the complement of his metaphysics—now as the base which supports the pillars of the springing arch, and then as the keystone which crowns and holds it together. It cannot be denied, we think, that the place which ethics occupy in Kant's theory of knowl-

Relation of the Kantian Ethics to the Metaphysics.

edge is unique and almost paradoxical, and that consequently his system is invested with a special fascination for the careful student of modern speculation.

§ 2. The reader will not infer that the author proposes first to interpret Kant's entire speculative system in order that he may explain or criticise his Ethics. To do so would be entirely gratuitous, after this work has been done so well by the editor of the present series and by other writers. But he could not avoid the distinct recognition of the relations of the one to the other, so far as this is required, in order to make the Ethics intelligible in both their weakness and strength. He could not but notice that the two are constantly and often inextricably intertwined together. The peculiar and oftentimes the strongly marked terminology of both ethics and philosophy makes it still more necessary to study the one by the light of the other. There is no use in disguising the fact that Kant's terminology is always technical in the extreme, and sometimes absolutely barbarous. Indeed, few writers, ancient or modern, of such marked ability, who have had so reasonable a claim to ask a hearing from their generation, have so completely cut themselves off from the Metaphysics at Length. Not Necessary to Exponnd the Metaphysics at Length.

off from the generations of philosophers who went before them by the adoption of an artificial and novel diction as Immanuel Kant has done. By this alone he could not but separate himself from the earlier thinking of his own youth and early manhood, as also from the thinking of his own generation, and at the same time load himself with the Herculean task of constructing and forcing upon his readers a peculiar and artificial terminology of his own. No writer of modern times, at least no one who has written so voluminously and so ably as Kant, has made so few references or allusions to the great philosophic thinkers of other times and to their opinions. That he had thought earnestly upon the same themes which had occupied their attention is abundantly evident; but for some reason or other he seems to have scorned to put himself *en rapport* with these great thinkers, or to hold with them any intimate relations of either indebtedness or repudiation. Whether it was owing to the depth of the dogmatic slumber in which Wolf had overwhelmed his spirit, or the suddenness and completeness of his awakening by Hume, or the delirious intoxication and delight with which his own imagined discoveries seemed to inspire him, whatever was the cause or the occasion, it is certain that he

spake to his generation in a strange philosophical dialect which it has been difficult for many of his interpreters to master, and which some have rashly but not unnaturally concluded was scarcely worth the mastering. But notwithstanding the uncouthness of the dialect which Kant employed, he compelled his generation to listen to his words and to attempt to solve the problems which he proposed. Many professed not to understand his meaning, and many complained with reason of the strangeness and harshness of his terminology, but those who listened could not escape the obligation to answer those of his questions which they could not fail to understand.

§ 3. Another excellent thing he accomplished : He made the men of his time understand that certain of the questions which he propounded must be answered after a way to which they had not been accustomed before.* As the result of his teachings and arguments, Speculative Science discovered new necessities, even though she felt herself unable to satisfy them. First of all, Philosophy was forced to confess

* Daher wird man, wo es sich um die Prinzipien, die eigentliche Aufgabe der Philosophie, handelt, nie vor Kant vorbeigehen dürfen. Mag man in der Lösung des Problems von Kant abweichen müssen, man wird immer von Kant lernen, wie man es zunächst aufzufassen und anzufassen. A. Trendelenburg, *Hist. Beitr. zur Philos.*, III, 172.

Kant's Important Services to Modern Thought.

that she could not ignore Theology. Religious un-
Especially belief was taught that the shallows in
upon which it had been content to wade were
Theology and Ethics. bordered by a deep and boundless sea.

As Faith was driven from one of its fancied strong-holds to another, it was seemingly to seek and to find its refuge only in ethical convictions and ethical authority. Whatever impression was made by Kant's speculative system, its ethical tone was felt to be lofty and commanding in its every strain. Wherever the Kantian philosophy was accepted, a noble and high-toned Stoicism took the place of the prevalent sensual and self-indulgent Epicureanism. Self-sacrifice and self-control were honored, and self-indulgence was put to shame. The old and sterner German virtues came to the front, which had been systematically dishonored by the corrupting sensualism of Voltaire in the youthful court of the Great Frederick, and the scarcely less debauching sentimentalism of Rousseau. The new German literature, certainly the better part of it, such as was represented by Schiller and his school, was animated by a genuine, if it was an overstrained and romantic, ethical fervor. It is almost universally acknowledged, and cannot be denied, that it was in the Kantian school that the

seeds were sown of those better aspirations of patriotism and self-control, of heroism and of faith, which were first so nobly tested in the war of the liberation and which in our own time triumphed so conspicuously in the resuscitation of Germany and its final consolidation in the New German Empire.

The influence of the Kantian Ethics upon faith in the supernatural and in the Christian verities seemed at first less favorable ^{Their Effect upon Faith in the Supernatural} than upon faith in human duty and patriotic self-sacrifice. This may be largely ascribed to the weakness of theology itself, which required a radical disintegration before it could rise to a newer and better life. Whatever may have been true of the immediate effects of the Critical Philosophy, it cannot be denied that so soon as supernatural Christianity rallied from its shallow naturalism, as it did in fact at the call of many earnest thinkers, it assumed a loftier ethical tone and proposed to itself a more positive and elevated spiritual ideal than ever before. It was doubtless true that Kant was forced by the logic of his own ethical system to dispense with and openly to dis- honor the supernatural and the personal as of comparatively little consequence in the Christian history, and as even a corrupting element; but the

final effect of his teachings, whether by action or reaction, has invested its supernatural facts to those who received them with a profounder spiritual significance and clothed them with new spiritual power. It may be conceded that for one or two generations the Kantian Ethics have been used as a weapon of effective assault upon historic Christianity in Germany, England, and America, while yet it may be asserted with undoubted truth, that his earnest and practical ethical spirit has animated the defenders of historic Christianity with higher and nobler conceptions of its spiritual import and enabled them the better to understand and defend it as both the necessity and the strength of modern thought.

§ 4. It will not fail to occur to many of my readers that the Kantian Ethics became a significant power in English thought and feeling long before the Kantian Metaphysics had begun to be appreciated or understood. The eloquent Coleridge is usually credited with having been the earliest effective exponent of both. Some literary critics would find in the awakened interest in the romantic school of German poetry, the first effect of the Kantian impulse. Even if this were so, Coleridge was foremost even in responding to this awakening power and finding in

Influence upon
Speculation and Literature
in England and America.

it a more profound and wide-reaching significance. If, however, we limit ourselves to ethics proper we can find no writer who so distinctly and fervently insisted as did Coleridge on the need of a better speculative system than that which had been accepted in England, and who also taught that Kant provided for this better system in his distinction between the Reason and the Understanding. The voice of Coleridge was indeed the voice of one crying in the wilderness, bewildering indeed at times, even when inspiring, as is the voice of every prophet, but it was loud and clear in its denunciation of the ethics taught in the English Universities and embodied in Paley's popular text-book. The present readers of Coleridge's criticisms of Paley and his expositions of Kant, find the last seriously defective in scientific exactness, representing Jacobi rather than Kant; but if they have attained to even a slight measure of the historic sense they cannot fail to acknowledge the signal service which he rendered in defending the nobler features of the system taught by Jacobi's great master. Carlyle, as a representative of Kant, was somewhat later than Coleridge, and far less philosophical than he in his pretensions and his achievements, though perhaps he was equally fervent in his practical aims. It is of little

consequence which of the two was the more efficient in introducing the new Ethics to the English public, or how large was the share which James Marsh, George Ripley, and Ralph Waldo Emerson might claim in furthering the same general movement in America. Most intelligent readers know that what after Kant was called the Transcendental Ethics attracted the attention and enlisted the sympathy of a large following in both England and the United States, and made itself felt in their literature and their criticism, in their polities, and their theology. This movement led many to new theories of man's moral nature, to new definitions and principles in speculative ethics, and was followed by the most important consequences in their modes of thinking and feeling in respect to the most vital questions of speculative and practical interest.

We may say indeed that the Kantian Ethics when conceived in this somewhat indefinite signification has had a far more positive and wide-spread influence in both England and America than the Kantian Metaphysics. The latter has, indeed, of late, through translations and comments, received much attention from speculative thinkers for its own sake and as a preparation for and transition stage to the later schools of German speculation. The former, the

Ethics, has not so frequently been formally expounded or carefully criticised, while yet it has been accepted by very many in a positive but rather indiscriminating way, as being in its distinctive features eminently worthy of confidence and the noblest work of its eminent defender. The Kantian Ethics as a speculative system or as related to the Kantian metaphysics has rarely, if ever, been the subject of careful and thorough criticism by any English writer. For this reason, if for no other, it is at present the more inviting theme for both critic and reader.

The treatment of this subject is not without its difficulties. Some of these difficulties have already been suggested. Others will make themselves known as we proceed. Kant is a writer whom it is not always easy to interpret to an English reader, even if his philosophical position, his terminology, and his German style presented no peculiar embarrassments. His system, if he can be said to have a system, is by no means so coherent or so closely stated as his uncritical admirers contend, and as some of his commentators insist. Let us expect, then, that serious difficulties in understanding and criticising him will be manifest as we proceed, and let the expectation

Difficulties
in Criticising
the Same.

arouse us to resolute effort. Of one thing the earnest student may be confident, and that is that the questions which Kant proposes are invested with an interest and importance which cannot easily be overestimated. Whether or not these questions are all rightly handled, or whether the solutions for which Kant contends are satisfactory or disappointing—they are all discussed in a manly temper, and with an effort at thoroughness which puts to shame every solicitation of indolence and every incitement of passion or partisanship.

KANT'S ETHICS.

CHAPTER I.

PRINCIPAL ETHICAL TREATISES—THEIR GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

§ 5. Kant's ethical system may be found in the following treatises, which were published in the order and at the times which are indicated below.

Titles of
Ethical
Treatises.

1. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1785, usually translated as *The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*.

2. *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*, 1788, *Critique of the Practical Reason*.

3. *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1797, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (in two parts, respectively of Rights, and Duties).

In order to appreciate fully the relations of these treatises to Kant's speculative system, the reader should scrutinize them in connection not only with one another, but with the *Critique of Pure Reason*, with which he astonished the world in 1781, and

also with his *Prolegomena to Every Possible Future System of Metaphysics*, which was published two years after, *i.e.*, two years before his first treatise upon Ethics. The treatise entitled *The Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* (*Die Kritik der Urtheils-Kraft*) also contains some special ethical matter. In all these treatises Kant endeavors to be consistent with himself, aiming in each to be true to the fundamental principles which he had laid down in respect to the sources, the authority, and the import of every description of knowledge. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, published four years before his first ethical treatise, he says very little of morals, although it is evident from the little that he does say that he had anticipated very distinctly the difficult questions which would be forced upon his attention by the logic of his philosophical theory; that he faced them resolutely, and to some extent anticipated the solutions which he subsequently expanded and defended in his formal treatises on Ethics proper.

§ 6. *The Critique of Pure Reason.* It hardly need be said to those who have read a few pages, is painfully thought and often painfully expressed, apparently to the writer and certainly to the reader. It is characteristic of this volume that in it Kant seems to

The Critique
of Pure
Reason.

be a seeker, rather than a finder, of truth in his aims and his processes; that at many points and turns he seems more or less uncertain of his own position, and to take unwearied pains—not always successfully—both in thinking himself clear and in expressing his meaning clearly to others. The probable and even possible inferences which might be derived from his doctrines by his inquirers and antagonists seem to intrude upon his attention at every step, and he is constantly tempted to pause and turn aside from his onward course to explain or overcome these objections and difficulties.

§ 7. In the *Prolegomena*, written two years afterward, he writes in a different tone—^{The} assuming and maintaining a different ^{Prolegomena.} attitude. Throughout this work his air is that of a combatant who is sure of his position and confident of victory. He writes like the discoverer of an “open sesame” to all future metaphysics of whatever sort, which he has only need to shout and at once every secret metaphysical door will fly open. Instead of inquiring, he propounds; instead of arguing, he explains. The very title of his treatise indicates his position and his feelings, it being a triumphant proclamation of what had been found by himself to be necessary for all future

metaphysicians by the experiences and failures of those who have gone before. The style and diction are in full sympathy with this new attitude. The writer is simple, cheerful, and almost defiant in his tone. His opinions are propounded, not inferred. He does not delay to answer objections; he scarcely notices them. He simply lays down the law, as one who is justified in speaking with authority.

The Prolegomena is confined to speculative metaphysics, and leaves all ethical questions untouched. But the Critique had furnished some distinct anticipations of Kant's ethical system. To these he was impelled by the desire to set aside the objections which might be urged against his speculative conclusions so far as these had been reached, viz.: that speculative knowledge, as such, is only trustworthy or valuable so far as it can explain the possibility of experience; urging that if it be true that neither the Soul, nor the Kosmos, nor God can be reached by the pure reason, then it follows that ethics must be the final arbiter which alone can give us solid reality of any sort, especially concerning the Soul in its relations to the future life and the Supreme.

The way in which ethics can render this service is explained by Kant at some length in the second

chapter of the *Transcendentale Methodenlehre*, *Zweites Hauptstück*, in which he outlines the ethical system which he developed four and seven years afterward in the classical ethical treatises already named (*cf.* §§ 5, 11, 12).

This preliminary outline deserves a brief notice, if for no other reason, because it serves to explain the original transition or connecting bridge which was designed in the mind of Kant to transfer his readers from his speculative to his ethical theory. It may be compared to the rough outline or hasty sketch of what afterward became an elaborate drawing, or, more exactly, to the germ of what afterward grew into a fully developed growth. We prefer to explain these relations here, in order that the intimate dependence of the two parts of Kant's system may be made more clear. We do not care to decide which of these theories was first developed, or was first suggested to his own mind. We very well know which was first drawn out in the detail of explanation and defence. But inasmuch as we find this ethical germ snugly imbedded in this speculative environment, we shall find it convenient first to explain this environment, that we may analyze the germ itself, and follow its subsequent development.

§ 8. It is well known that the question with

Critique of Pure Reason. Fundamental Question of. which Kant sets off in his *Critique of Pure Reason* is this: *Are synthetic judgments a priori possible?* Are there such judgments, and how are they to be accounted for? The first of these questions is, in Kant's view, answered in the asking. No one will deny that there must be such judgments. Otherwise there could be no science, no mathematics, no logic, no physics, and no psychology.* Every one of these sciences may be traced back to certain comprehensive judgments which are synthetic, *i.e.*, to propositions of which the predicate is not contained in nor implied by the subject, but in which it is affirmed of or super-added to it by a direct and intuitive affirmation. As such an affirmation enlarges one's knowledge, it is called *synthetic*, in contrast to one which merely analyzes or expands the import already affirmed of its subject, and as it does this by a direct assent of the intellect without the intermediation of reasoning, it is called *a priori*. Examples of such knowledge are: *Two right lines cannot inclose a space.* *All bodies are extended.* *Every event is caused.* *Psychical phe-*

* The advocates of the doctrine that ethics furnishes the foundation for speculative truth of every kind might find in this argument the justification of their position thus: inasmuch as without science man cannot live a human life — the life worthy of a man, to which his higher aspirations, faith, and convictions compel him — it follows that these synthetic speculative judgments must be true.

momenta are experienced in succession. The possibility of such propositions is still further explained by ultimate data, which are given by and to the pure reason, in connection with the operations of intuition, as these are exemplified in the outer and inner sense and in the higher processes of reasoning. These data are the forms of Sense, which are Space and Time, the Categories of the Understanding, and the three Ideas of the Reason, viz.; the Soul, the Kosmos, and God. Without these *a priori* relations and the concepts and propositions that depend on them, Kant argues at length there can be no rational knowledge. In every description and degree of knowledge, even in the lowest, more or fewer of these *a priori* elements are recognized or implied.

§ 9. It is also to be noticed as a capital feature of Kant's system that the materials of knowledge, *i.e.*, its *a posteriori* elements ^{Phenomena} *vs. Things in Themselves.*, given by experience, as contradistinguished from those relations which are given *a priori*, are assumed to be *phenomena*—spiritual or corporeal—but are not things at all, *i.e.*, not *things in themselves*. When we face the sense-world, we do not discern things or realities, but only phenomena, as sights, feels, and smells, etc. So in the spirit world we are conscious only of sensations,

imaginations, and thoughts, but not of *ourselves* as seeing, hearing, remembering, or imagining. What men are accustomed to conceive as realities by eminence, *i.e.*, the realities of the material world, and mayhap in the view of some, the realities of spirit—these are only phenomena as contrasted with things in themselves, *i.e.*, solid realities. These phenomena we connect in groups, by sense-forms and thought-categories, calling a group of sense-phenomena a tree, a house, or a horse, uniting them as substance and attribute, as cause and effect, etc., but never at all reaching things in themselves, *Dinge an sich*. These remain ever beyond our reach, ever eluding our grasp. The nearest semblance of real oneness which we can come to is some unity of apperception which we can revive or modify after an order or *scheme* of the imagination derived from time and space relations.

In contrast with these sense-objects and sense-groups of phenomena we grasp after ^{Noumena.} *Noumena*, *i.e.*, intelligible realities, as possible and actual. We come nearest to these when we seem to be conscious of our own Ego or self, but even then we find that what we seize is but an illusion—an illusion of thought or a figure of speech. However imposing and compli-

cated these may seem to be, they are only *phenomena*, suggesting, it may be, the *noumena*, the things which can never be reached. When, however, we rise to the highest forms of knowledge, other *a priori* elements present themselves and seem to be required to make possible our highest moods of experience, possible or rational. These are the so-called Ideas of the Reason, viz.: the Soul, the orderly Kosmos, and the Self-existent, or the Absolute: God! Without each and all of these *a priori* elements, we can neither employ nor apply the lessons of experience, we can attain neither speculative knowledge nor practical wisdom. And yet, for all this, we have no scientific authority for believing any of these objects of thought to be real, although we cannot avoid reasoning and acting as if they were so.

§ 10. This is a brief statement of Kant's speculative system and the position into which it brings man in respect to his confidence in the speculative reason. Phenomena are known and knowable, and only phenomena, phenomena external and internal — never things in themselves. Noumena are neither knowable nor known. Phenomena are connected with one another by relations *a priori* of space and time, also by the relations of thought, making complete the

Limits of
Human
Knowledge.

semblances but never revealing the realities of either things or spirits. Both these again can be connected, *i.e.*, regulated by the ideas suggested by the mental and material universe, both being dependent on and united by, the uncreated God, while yet these ideas are vouched for by no absolute and *a priori* certainty.

It hardly need be said that this outcome of Disappointment. Kant's Critique is, so far, the exact opposite of what would be anticipated from the purposes and promises with which he began. It would seem from the confidence of his promises at the outset, that he was about to introduce us to a wide range of spiritual knowledge, knowledge which should be equally clear and positive on the spiritual and on the material side. Allured by these promises, we yield ourselves submissively and confidently to his guidance, following him step by step ; but at each step our footing becomes less firm, the path itself sinks deeper and deeper, and at the end we hardly know whether it is treacherous marsh or iridescent cloud-land on which we seem now to tread and then to fly. But just as we are overwhelmed in the mire of uncertainty or Promised Deliverance. are entangled most hopelessly in the network of *a priori* relations, to which we

eling for deliverance, to find that they do nothing but hold themselves together, we are hailed by our guide with words of cheer in the Kanon of Pure Reason. Under this title he ventures to assure us that his ethical system will remove all the difficulties in which criticism had involved us, that it will bring light and solidity and certainty both to our knowledge and our faith, that it will give back to us material things and spiritual entities, God and Immortality, all of which had seemed to take their flight at his conjuring wand—in other words, that the Critique of Practical Reason will by the authority of its simple imperative deliver us from the spirit of doubt with which the criticism of the speculative reason had overwhelmed us.

§ 11. The elements of this would-be constructive ethics are briefly as follows: First Elements of Kant's Constructive Ethics. of all, our teacher advises us that it is of comparatively little consequence what our speculative views may be, even in respect to the most important subjects. We ought not to be seriously disturbed by speculative criticism of any sort, inasmuch as after all our chief concern is with what we should *be* and *do*, not with what we *can know*. The questions which we need most to settle are practical questions, and concern the free-

dom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God, inasmuch as these affect what we can do in the exercise of our freedom. As this freedom is intelligent, its impulses must be stimulated and directed by enlightened reflection on the motives which impel it to action. Hence, if there be freedom there must be knowledge of what is profitable and useful and desirable, not of what merely seems to be, but of what *actually is*. It also implies the knowledge of what ought to be done—consequently that which if it ought, *may be done*. Both these descriptions of motives are *laws* or *imperatives*, either the imperative of *interest*, saying: If you will gain this or that, do so or so; or the imperative of *freedom*, telling us what ought to be done, and therefore implying that it can be done, in the exercise of man's highest prerogative. That is, so far as the direction of conduct is concerned, it is of no consequence whether what seems to be actually is what it appears to be, or whether we can know what it is, or whether anything is, in the sense of reality, provided we are confronted with the imperative, *Do this or that.*

With the mutual relations of these two kinds of law we have nothing to do, so long as the law of duty unconditionally presents what *we ought* to do.

Nor is it of any consequence whether they are or are not reconcilable, or whether they have any common root. The prescription of reason still remains supreme. *Do that which is right.*

§ 12. In respect to our highest good, however, or the *summum bonum*, the question of the mutual relations of what is and ought to be, is most important. The Kantian answer to this turns upon the three inquiries: *What can I know?* *What ought I to do?* *What may I hope for?*

The first of these questions had been partially but unsatisfactorily answered in the terms: I can know only phenomena, not noumena or things in themselves. I can also know their relations in some sense, provided it be not what might be called their nature or essence. *The second*, being practical, cannot be answered in terms of intellectual knowledge, inasmuch as intellectual knowledge only gives us an acquaintance with phenomena, but never with realities or things in themselves. *The third*, however, is both practical and theoretical, and in fact is answered thus: You can know that the something which you hope for will be, because it ought to be. You can know there is a God and a future life, because both must be, in order that virtue may be

rewarded and vice may be punished; or, in other words, that what ought to be must be. In other words, the problem of knowledge, which, as a problem of the speculative reason, has hitherto been unsolved, and baffled all our attempts to explain it, is settled by the imperative demands of the practical reason. The comprehensive principle which is the basis of all practical knowledge, and indirectly of all knowledge whatever, is the principle that the virtuous ought to be happy. They cannot be happy unless there is another life. They cannot be happy unless God exists to reward them and to punish the bad; or, more comprehensively, unless certain semblances or phenomena of things are conformed to things as they are, *i.e.*, to things in themselves.

§ 13. Whatever on second thought we may think of this argument, it cannot be denied that at first view it seems plausible, and for the reason that it recognizes moral relations as *practically* supreme—and if ethical relations are practically supreme, they are not only themselves speculatively true, but they impart authority and validity to certain relations and things which are purely speculative. When tried by the criterion of the realities of common sense, which holds to the possibility of the knowledge of noumena, at

least in the world of spirit, which recognizes a community of relations between the intellectual and the ethical universe, common sense asserts that the ethical and the emotional stand highest of all rational considerations as grounds of truth and evidences of reality. But when viewed against the background of the Kantian scepticism, which limits all knowledge to phenomena, and, after denying the capacity of reason to discover the objective truth which it yet asserts must be assumed, comes in to help reason out of the ditch into which it had plunged it, by requiring it to abandon its own appropriate functions, the argument is not likely to be so readily welcomed as a helper. The blow which first strikes a man to the earth, if it is a blow of dishonor, is far more likely to be remembered and resented than the helping hand which is subsequently moved in condescending pity to lift him up. Unsophisticated and logical common sense suggests the thought that if the mind be as limited in the range and authority of its knowledge as Kant has written a long book to persuade us is true, then we can know only the relations of phenomena, in every form or method of reasoning, the speculative and practical alike. Likewise when I reason that I shall live another life because I ought to be

rewarded or punished, and shall find a God living to deal with me according to my deserts, then I have already assumed the reality of two *noumena* at least, if not the reality of three; certainly that of the conscious Ego and God the rewarder, and, it would seem, of the Kosmos, as a permanent noumenon, with its changing phenomena of a here and a hereafter.

§ 14. Doubtless Kant easily persuaded himself, as do many of his readers, that he ~~Consistency.~~ ^{Obligation to} lieses himself from this apparent inconsistency by his view of the superior character of ethical relations. But he cannot thereby evade the obligation to be consistent with himself. He tells us, indeed, that the practical reason not only affirms certain relations of conduct, by synthetic judgments *a priori*, but that it also enforces them in the forms of command. He asserts, moreover, that these commands involve relations of merit and demerit, and that these require a being who is able and willing to enforce them. But he forgets altogether to recognize the truth that in all these assertions he has overstepped the limits within which he had entrenched himself; that every one of these ethical demands supposes noumena in the form of personal beings—that only the Ego as an exist-

ing being, and not at all as a phenomenon, can respond to a command or apprehend merit or a possible immortality, and that all the plausibility that his argument gains when regarded as a proof for the Ego, or a future life, or an existing God, is derived from the dexterity, or, rather, we should say, the unconsciousness, with which at the critical or turning points of his argument Kant adroitly substitutes the noumenal for the phenomenal, and interchanges the relations which are appropriate to each. That moral relations and moral interests may be the most convincing of all in respect to the continued existence of the soul, and that the moral constitution of the soul may be the one transparent medium through which we gain and keep our faith in the moral perfection and righteous government of God, are both most important truths. These truths lend color and plausibility to Kant's ethical remedy against the scepticism he had created; but they cannot in the least justify or alleviate the suggestion of the scepticism with which he had previously cut the nerve of our confidence in every description of truth, whether rational or ethical.

§ 15. It should be remembered that this exposition and defence which Kant ^{This Solution} has furnished of his ethical theory is ^{Preliminary} ^{and Imperfect.}

merely an anticipation of what he subsequently expounded at length in his two principal treatises. As we have already stated, the attitude which he assumed with respect to his ethical system became more positive and assured after the publication of the first Critique. His statements became more and more dogmatic, his defences more assured, and his illustrations more complete. He never, however, parts with his intellectual dignity, or loses aught of the most complete self-respect or reverence for his own personal uprightness.

Thus far we have been occupied with these ethical anticipations only, as we find them in the Critique of Pure Reason. It was four years after its publication that he took a more positive attitude, and gave to the world the Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals, *Die Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1785. In this treatise he proposes to himself the task of positively determining what are the ultimate grounds or fundamental elements of moral science, as preliminary to the Critique of Practical Reason. So far as the titles of these two works would indicate a difference in them as objects or products of thought, the first would be an analytic search for the principles of the science of duty, and the second a critical examination of

those functions of the same reason which originate and sustain these principles or conclusions. The second treatise, which in a sense was a supplement, or completion, of the first, was published in 1788, three years later.

§ 16. In scrutinizing these treatises, we need to be reminded, first, that it is not easy Kant's Principles, Relative and Absolute, under any circumstances to thread our way through the mazes of Kant's analyses and argumentations. Especially is this true of his ethical writings, for the reason that many of the underlying practical truths which give color and dignity to his discussions are so elevated and weighty, and in their applied signification seem so axiomatic and self-evident. Whether or not they are scientifically exact, they are unquestionably in some practical signification clothed with the highest authority. Hence, in reading Kant's ethical writings, we are often exposed to the danger, and this is often serious, of confounding popular with scientific propositions, and of attaching a metaphysical import and philosophical authority to distinctions and propositions that are simply practical, and popular. To avoid this danger, the following observations may not be out of place.

A sharp distinction should be made and held

between those metaphysical principles* which are relatively and those which are absolutely primitive and fundamental, *i.e.*, between those propositions which are axiomatic to one science and a group of sciences, on the one hand, and those which, on the other, are fundamental to all the sciences and to scientific thinking as such. For example, it will not be questioned that a few physical sciences rest upon certain principles which are peculiar to themselves, and yet are common to them all. The relations being common, the concepts and principles are common. When grouped together, they constitute the metaphysics which is common and fundamental alike to all the physical sciences, as mechanics, optics, chemistry, etc. Similarly, each individual science has its own metaphysics, and we speak briefly and confidently of the metaphysics of mathematics, of chemistry, etc. Similarly, we speak of the metaphysics of the organic or vital sciences in common, and of the metaphysics of plant and animal life in special. Similarly, it may be supposed that there may be special and general metaphysics of all spiritual beings in common, and of the intellectual, emotional, and voluntary activities in particular.

* For variety in the signification of Principles see Porter: Human Intellect, § 511.

§ 17. We observe here that the special metaphysical principles which are fundamental to ethics have the very peculiar attraction of being easily apprehended by, and, so to speak, accessible to, all men. They commend themselves to the assenting convictions of all. More than all, they appeal to the emotions of mankind, and to the emotions which are the strongest and most tender. They are clothed with the most sacred authority, and evoke the noblest and the most disinterested of the affections. For these reasons it often happens that men who deny all other axioms, because perhaps they cannot understand them for the general or abstract language in which they are phrased, cannot withhold their assent to the axioms of ethical truth, and, for the simple reason that these are the only principles with which they are familiar and which they can understand, are ready to accept them as the only truths which are invested with self-evident certainty. Hence, should the demand be made upon them in view of the obscurity or the uncertainty of all other fundamental truths, to accept ethical truths as the possible foundations of all the rest, the demand finds a comparatively ready response. Every other special metaphysics is to their

Fundamental
Principles
of Ethics
readily Under-
stood and
Assented to.

mind more or less abstract and unfamiliar, whether it be the metaphysics of mathematics, or chemistry, or physics, etc. The same is true of general metaphysics, *i.e.*, the metaphysics of everything that is knowable, whether subdivided into spirit and matter, or generalized as being, finite and infinite. But the special axioms of duty, the truths and laws which are suggested on all occasions and enforced by universal experience, these are so clear, so severe, and so true that no man can question them. Whatever else a man may question, he will never question these "truths which wake to perish never." It is not surprising that the mind which is shaken by every other scepticism should not only rest upon ethical truths as unshaken, but should also accept these as giving authority to truth of every kind, and as being themselves the cornerstones of all knowledge and the tests of all our other faiths, whether in man, or nature, or God.

§ 18. We should never lose sight of the fact that the speculative metaphysics of Kant, as presented in the Critique of Pure Reason, not only failed to procure assent to its own authority, but formally renounced for itself any other than a partial and relative supremacy. While its able exponent

contended for the necessity of assuming certain fundamental principles of the speculative reason as the *a priori* conditions of all knowledge, he as deliberately and scientifically contends that this necessity is simply subjective and carries with it no objective reality. The forms and categories and ideas which enter into the very structure of all scientific knowledge, are held by him to be simply necessary to make experience possible and science trustworthy. The *a priori* or metaphysical elements are necessary, otherwise common experience and reasoned science would be impossible. But as to whether these subjective elements have also any objective reality, he teaches us that we can neither affirm nor deny. It is not surprising that under the pressure of this necessity he should have reverted to the sacred relations of duty as the sheet anchor of both science and faith, that in this desperate need the practical axioms of prudence and duty should take occasion to assert their superior attractiveness and authority, nor that the appeal should also be made to them as competent to clear up whatever else seemed obscure, and to restore the faith in scientific truth which had been deliberately undermined. In other words, it is not surprising that the axioms of a special science should have been generalized so

broadly as to serve as a speculative basis for the entire truth of the sciences in general, and that the fundamental truths of ethics should be accepted as fundamental, not only to the successful conduct of life, but to every description of knowledge whatever.

§ 19. The reasons why such a transfer and confusion of principles and of thought would be plausible, have already been explained. That Kant had sought to prove the objective untrustworthiness of any and every form of purely speculative metaphysics, has been made sufficiently clear. As we have already explained, it is no part of our duty to discuss at any length the question whether these attempts to weaken our confidence in this trustworthiness were successful. That inquiry must be transferred to the critical examination of his speculative system. Nor have we as yet attempted to show that his effort to substitute an ethical for a rational metaphysics was a failure. We have only suggested certain reasons why ethical or practical principles might readily be accepted by many students and readers as fundamental for all knowledge, when there was no occasion to resort to them, on the one hand, nor any demonstrated capacity in them to meet the demand, on the other. It was

Danger of Confounding Speculative and Ethical Principles.

Kant who attempted to show that they could meet the supposed exigency. It is our first duty to inquire whether he was successful. But all this is preliminary to our formal examination of Kant's ethical system as a whole. This examination, we may expect, will develop the weakness and strength of his exposition of his views upon every point. Our critical comments, thus far, have been confined to the brief anticipations of his ethical theory which we find in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.*

We Proceed
Next to the
Examination
of His Formal
Motives.

The detailed exposition of Kant's ethical system is found in the two treatises already referred to. We begin with the first.

* *Transcendentale Methodenlehre*, 2tes Hauptstück.

CHAPTER II.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS.*

§ 20. This treatise does not profess to be a complete discussion of all the metaphysical principles which are fundamental to practical and scientific ethics. It is rather a statement of its more important problems, *i.e.*, such as are preliminary to a critical examination of the practical reason or the so-called moral faculty, and to a completed and rationalized system of duties and precepts as a final result. The treatise also supposes the reader to be acquainted with the author's speculative system as expounded in the Critique of Pure Reason, and the distinctions which that treatise labors to establish. The writer had certainly a right to assume that the doctrines which he had so elaborately expounded in his *magnum opus* had by this time become familiar to every reader of the later treatise, and he does not hesitate to proceed upon this assumption. In this way we explain and excuse the brevity and the abruptness of some portions of this

* *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten.*

his first ethical essay, and the apparent obscurity of some of its allusions.

§ 21. In the preface Kant directs the attention of the reader to the fact that all knowledge is either *formal* or *material* — the ^{A Metaphysics of Morals Possible.} formal concerning itself with the universal laws or relations of thought, without respect to its objects, while the material respects the varying properties of existing things as either physical, *i.e.*, necessary, or spiritual, *i.e.*, free. He also notices that the laws which respect either may respect events as they *are* or as they *ought to be*; thus giving the distinction between physics and ethics. Then again, we call philosophy *empirical* so far as it is based on experience, and *metaphysical* when it rests on *a priori* principles. Consequently, physics and ethics may be either empirical or pure, so far as they rest upon either.

These distinctions being established, the writer proposes the question whether it is possible to establish a system of ethics that shall be a purely rational science, and as such "perfectly cleared of everything which is only empirical and which belongs to anthropology."* To this he replies, that such a

* We notice here once for all that the doctrine which Kant so often refers to and so often rejects under this title, was the current

philosophy is possible "is evident from the common idea of duty and of the moral law." For example, the precept, "Thou shalt not lie," is not valid for man alone as man, but also for other rational beings, and consequently its basis is not to be sought in man's human nature, nor in his circumstances. "but *a priori* simply in the conceptions of the pure reason. * * * Though this or any other precept which is founded on mere experience may be in certain respects universal, yet so far as it rests on an empirical basis, even only as to its motive, such a precept, though it may be called a practical rule, can never be called a moral law. * * * Moral philosophy when applied to man does not borrow the least thing from the knowledge of man himself (*i.e.*, from anthropology) but gives laws *a priori* to him as a rational being. * * * A metaphysics of morals is therefore indispensably necessary, not merely for speculative reasons. * * * but also because morals themselves are liable to all sorts of corruption so long as we are without that clue and

theory received from the ancient schools, that a life of virtue or moral excellence is "a life according to nature," *human nature* being understood by this term. It is singular that Kant should have overlooked the possible reply to his oft-repeated strictures; that it was *human nature qua-rational*, that was intended, and that the ideal of aspiration and the norm of judgment was never the emotional or the passionate, or, as Kant would call it, *the empirical*, in man.

supreme canon by which to estimate them correctly. For in order that an action should be morally good, it is not enough that it should conform to the moral law, but it should also be done *for the sake of the law*."

In order to make it clear that the author's theory of ethical ideas differs from that which was current in his time, he calls attention to the doctrine of Wolf in his *Propædetic*, who contends for the freedom of the will as the foundation of moral concepts, but, in the judgment of Kant, overlooks altogether the point that it is with acts of *pure* will, as such, that moral freedom is especially concerned; in other words, that the subjective element of freedom, as such, is not the preëminently ethical element, but that what is distinctively ethical is the *a priori* *motive* with which the will is confronted by and from the reason.

§ 22. In these terms and statements the author vaguely sketches the theory which he proposes to explain and defend at length in respect to the fundamental conceptions of scientific morality, and more than vaguely hints what that theory will inevitably prove to be. The chief points which he has thus far explicitly stated, seem to be the following: That moral relations

Preliminary
Sketch of the
Author's
System.

are discerned by the reason, and by the reason only, and consequently have no discernible or necessary relation to the empirical or emotional nature, which neither enters into their essence nor imparts to them authority. It follows, as it would seem, that he holds that neither the nature of man as man nor as a sensitive, rational being furnishes the ground or enters into the definition of ethical conceptions, but that these distinctive elements are simply *a priori*, *i.e.*, are a peculiar class of relations, which are discerned and enforced by the practical reason independently and alone. All this is vaguely assumed in the preface, or intimated as certain to be the result of the subsequent discussion. It is also manifest even to the superficial reader that this preface was written after the essay, and cannot be fully appreciated till the essay shall have been read, depending as it does for its interpretation and enforcement upon the subsequent discussions of which it gives an indefinite outline or an obscure anticipation. It concludes with the programme in which

the author proposes, (1) to proceed from
Division of Topics in the the common to the philosophical knowl-
Grundlegung. edge of morals, (2) from popular,
i.e., *quasi*-rational, morals to its metaphysics,
and (3) from its metaphysics to the Critique of

the Pure Practical Reason—the second treatise, for which this is the introduction. This programme, in a general way, is adhered to by the author with no great rigor of method; as is manifest from the digressions and anticipations which characterize his always somewhat rambling discussion.

§ 23. The first section of the treatise opens with the memorable and often quoted utterance, that "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will." If character is compared with gifts of nature, as intelligence, courage, and gifts of fortune, as riches, health, or contentment, all these are defective, "if there is not a good will to correct their possible perversion and to rectify the whole principle of acting, and adapt it to its end." A man who is endowed with every other good can never give pleasure to an impartial rational spectator, unless he possesses a good will. "Thus a good will appears to constitute the indispensable condition of being worthy of happiness. * * * Moreover, a good will is good, not for what it effects, but for what it intends, even when it fails to accomplish its purposes, * * * as when a man wills the good

Import of his
Opening
Sentence.

of another and is impotent to promote it, or actually effects just the opposite of what he proposes or wills."

The author anticipates that this last proposition may seem extravagant, and for this reason he subjects it to a careful scrutiny. He urges that if happiness,* as such, were the chief purpose of nature, this end would have been more effectually provided for by a simple instinct impelling directly and invariably to this end, instead of being left to the fallibility of the individual reason and the caprice of the individual will. The actual arrangements of nature, as we find them, would seem to indicate that they all suppose adaptation to the occasions and service of a good will as a good in itself. This good will as a good in itself must be "the supreme good and the condition of every other, even of the desire of happiness," though it is not the sole or the complete good, inferior and accidental goods being often connected with or separated from this as the supreme.

§ 23. Kant proceeds to reason if we seek to

* As though happiness, as such, or the production of happiness, had ever been supposed to have any moral excellence, or anything short of the *voluntary* production of happiness, and of the highest happiness at that. As though all moralists who are worth considering had not emphasized the good will, or the willing of good, as the supreme excellence.

define this "good will"—in other words, to define an act of duty—we must first set aside all those actions which are inconsistent with duty. None of these can proceed from a "good will." We shall also exclude all those acts which are consistent with duty, and yet are done from *inclination only*, and not with a conscious recognition of them as morally good. (1) An Act In every such case, it is assumed by the author that the act cannot be an act of duty. duty at all. As, for example, a trader is honest from good policy only, or a man preserves his life as duty requires, but not because duty requires; or, though to be beneficent where we can be is a duty, yet if a man is beneficent because of the delight which follows to his pathological or emotional nature, his acts are not acts of duty. "For the maxim of conduct here wants the moral import, namely, that such actions be done *from duty*, not from inclination. * * * It is in this manner, undoubtedly, that we are to understand those passages of Scripture, also, in which we are commanded to love our neighbor, even our enemy. For love,* as an

Kant's Interpretation of the *Good Will*.

from Inclination Not an Act of Duty.

* We notice here that Kant does not recognize the possibility that love, or any affection or emotion, should be impelled or regulated by the will, but conceives of the will as the controller of the actions only, i.e., the bodily actions. Consequently, the comprehensive law, "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God," becomes to him impossible and meaningless.

affection, cannot be commanded, but only beneficence for duty's sake, even though we are not impelled to it by any inclination, nay, are even repelled by a natural and unconquerable aversion. It is *practical* love, and not *pathological*, a love which is seated in the will, and not in the propensities of sense; in principles of action, and not of tender sympathy; and it is this love only which can be commanded."

§ 24. The second proposition is, "that an action (2) The Maxim, done from duty derives its moral worth, not the End. Determines Moral Worth. not from the purpose which is to be attained by it," but from the maxim by which it is determined, and that its moral character, therefore, does not depend on the purpose being realized, but merely on the "principle of the volition" which has produced the action. Such a principle is formal or *a priori*, as contrasted with a spontaneous or material spring of action.

We observe here that by maxim Kant means the action in the mind of the individual, the intended object, when expressed as purposed by the individual, and thus indicating the rule by which he is in fact controlled.

(3) Respect for the Law Essential to Duty. § 25. The third proposition derived from the foregoing is, that "duty is the necessity of acting from respect for the

law. I may have an *inclination* for an object as an effect of my action, but I cannot have respect for it, just for this reason, that it is an effect and not an energy of will. * * * It is *only* what is connected with the will as a principle, but by no means as an effect—what does not subserve my inclination, but overpowers it, or, at least, in case of choice excludes it from its calculation—in other words, it is simply the law of itself, which can be an object of respect, and hence a command.

"But what sort of law can there be, the very thought of which must determine the ^{The Content} will, without reference to any effect? ^{or Import} _{of the Moral} * * * Every impulse, as such, has _{Law.} been set aside from being a principle. Nothing remains but the universal conformity of action to law in general." In other words, "I am never to *act* otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law." What the author intends by this very abstract statement he illustrates by an example: *Is it ever when in distress make a promise, with the intention not to keep it?* We do not ask, *Is it never prudent, but is it ever right, thus to do?* For myself it may be safe and advantageous, not only in a single instance, but in every case. There is a short way to

decide the question, "whether a lying promise is ever consistent with duty," and that is to ask whether such a rule of action can ever be made a universal law. Though I can will a lie, I cannot will that lying should be a universal law. Why this should be, Kant does not here attempt to explain. He would even assert that no explanation of this unfitness* to become a law is possible. This remains as an unsolved problem, and yet somehow we know that a law, to be moral, must be such as can enter into universal legislation; also that it must extort or command respect, and that this respect takes precedence over and sets aside whatever is recommended by inclination. Moreover, the necessity of acting from pure respect to the law constitutes duty, and is the condition of that good will which is a good in itself, and consequently is the only thing which can be styled good without qualification.

In concluding the first section, the author adverts to the fact that the practical reason reveals its distinctions with a simplicity and an authority which are strikingly contrasted with the maxims and prin-

* "Fitness to become a law," it should be observed, is no adaptation that is founded in the nature of man, individually or socially: Kant says of it, that it is purely rational, whatever this may be, and moreover, that it extorts and commands respect,

ciples taught by the speculative reason. Consequently, to accept the first, he urges, is eminently safe and wise, even when they seem to be inconsistent with the teachings of the last. And yet we are impelled by a necessity which we cannot resist to attempt to reconcile the two, but always with a tenacious faith in the superior commands of the practical reason.

§ 26. We have already adverted (*cf.* § 10) to the *quasi-sceptical* mood in respect to the

trustworthiness of speculative truth, with its forms and its categories, with its ideas, phenomena, noumena, and all,

into which Kant had brought himself and would fain bring his reader, as the outcome of the Critique of Pure Reason. We have also explained the deliverance from these entanglements which he anticipated as possible through the categorical imperative of duty, as implied in and enforced by the practical reason. The principal elements of this concept of duty have been given in this first section, as he conceives them to occur in the experience of unreflecting men. To these experiences, as we have seen, he makes his final appeal. Whether his analysis of these experiences is satisfactory in all these particulars remains to be

seen, as we seek to subject it to careful criticism before we proceed to an examination of the ampler discussions which follow. We do this at once because this section presents in a brief but popular form many of the distinctive features of Kant's entire theory, the fallacy of which, when detected and exposed, may aid the reader in detecting similar errors in the subsequent arguments, and especially may sharpen his discernment to distinguish between a popular and a scientific metaphysics of ethics.

Criticism of Kant's First Sentence. § 27. Thus far have we been content to explain Kant's argument. We begin our criticism with Kant's first sentence, an utterance which has become classic from its fervid tone, and which, when rightly interpreted, expresses an important practical truth. "*Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will.*" To this proposition, as an utterance of practical ethical truth in popular language, the adherent of almost every ethical theory would give his ready and fervent assent. But as uttered by Kant, it expresses the metaphysical principle (in technical language) that moral goodness has no relation to any other goodness; that it is not only superior in quality to

every other, but cannot properly be classed or compared with any other. As accepted with equal positiveness and fervor, as it may be and often is, by those who dissent from Kant, it asserts the incomparable and unquestioned superiority of the moral among the other kinds of good with which it *can*, and, as it would seem, *must be compared*, in order that its supremacy may be manifest. As applied by Kant, it asserts that there is but one real good, "good without qualification," and that is moral good, which cannot be defined in terms of any other, and which certainly cannot be classed with any other, and as it would seem can be compared with no other. As assented to by those who dissent from Kant's philosophy, it would require them to substitute the phrase, "the supreme good," for "good without qualification," meaning by "supreme" the "best in quality or kind," as distinguished from the most energetic or intense.

§ 28. The "good will" which either *is* or brings so great a good, in the view of those who dissent from Kant, is an act or state of ^{Diverse} Meanings of the will, *a voluntary choice* or love of ^{Good Will.} the highest or supreme natural good, which for this reason is both logically and actually superior to every other, "a good without qualification," "a

good beyond compare." The difference between the two positions is explained by the fact that, according to Kant, the good will is determined by no impulse of or motion in, the sensibility, either felt or discerned, but by the simple authority of the reason, which utters its dictum or command without a reason. Hence the good will which is recognized as "a good without qualification" is a will determined *by the reason only*, not merely in spite of certain lower impulses of the sensibility, but independently of any motives whatever which are addressed to any sensibilities that are higher. According to the dissentients from Kant, a good will is an act or state of will which responds to a motive that addresses the highest or best natural sensibility. The choice of such a good, but not the chosen good, is the morally good will.

It would seem that when Kant's proposition was thus fully and fairly stated, it would at least fail to command unquestioning assent, if it did not in many cases elicit a positive dissent. And yet it is not difficult to understand why it should frequently seem to be axiomatic and self-evident. It strikes the key-note of Kant's ethical system, revealing its apparent strength and its real weakness. It finds its apparent strength in its homage to the higher

impulses, which it would fain exalt so high that they should seem to rise above the region of the sensibilities proper, and to float in the empyrean of the pure reason. It finds additional plausibility in the emphasis which it lays upon the will as the centre and source of all human responsibility, when contrasted with the sensibility and intellect, either or both. Its weakness lies in its oversight of the fact that it is only through the sensibilities that the will can act morally at all, by energizing and controlling them — this oversight involving the depreciation and almost the contemptuous disesteem of the feelings as psychical experiences, and justifying the inference that the emotional or pathological in man's nature, even when animated and controlled by the will, is not only not moral, but is positively immoral in its functions and its products.

The opponents of Kant find no difficulty in assenting to every one of his utterances as true and important, so long as they read between the lines their own interpretation of the terms and propositions. But while they accept with all their hearts his leading propositions when thus modified, they must protest against the dishonor done to the sensibilities as either an immoral or an unethical element of character. They would say emphatically, while it is

true that mere sensibility, except as it is penetrated and directed by the will, has no ethical character whatever, it is equally true—a fact which Kant overlooks, and would almost seem to deny—that an act of mere will, except as it animates and controls the sensibility, is equally unethical. They accept the doctrine that “a good will is not good because of what it performs or effects, nor by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition,” and yet reject the inference that it is “good in itself,” if this implies that no good, *i.e.*, no sentient good, is in fact intended, proposed as a maxim, felt as a motive, or obeyed as a law, by this masterful *good will*.

§ 29. As we follow the argument of Kant, it would seem as though he was led to suspect the soundness of his exclusion of sentient good as an essential element of the satisfactory definition of a good will, when he urges that, were happiness the end of man's existence it were better and more economical for nature to bestow happiness on him without the hazard of freedom, taking on herself the choice not only of the ends of human life, but also of the means for their attainment, and with wise forecast intrusting both to “instinct”—as though anyone had contended

or dreamed that any single element could constitute the "good will." How could he overlook the fact so often emphasized by himself, that the element of freedom must be prominent in the intelligent choice—as we say between higher and lower forms of natural good—in order to impart to it a quality so peculiar that it alone could deserve to be called "good in itself"? Is it not Kant himself who contends that if nature would adapt means to an end, "its true destination must be to produce a will, not merely as a means to something else, but good in itself, for which reason was absolutely necessary"? Here the question cannot but suggest itself, if reason was absolutely necessary to this good will, why might not freedom also be necessary (contrary to his supposition of instinct), and if freedom and reason, why might not *sensibility* be also required, with its capacity for and its impulses toward higher and lower natural good, even though it must also be voluntary and directed by reason in order to obtain an ethical value and to rise to the unmatched excellence of "the good will."

§ 30. But from the position that the "good will" is a "good in itself," Kant easily ^{Kant's Limited} glides into the conclusion that it must ^{and Low} _{Conception of} control every other good, even "the Happiness."

desire of happiness," as though these two could in any sense be coördinate or come into conflict. We notice here, and intreat our readers never to lose sight of the fact, that "happiness" and the "desire of happiness," are invariably used by Kant in a special and sensuous import, being limited to the animal and other lower affections as contrasted with the rational and higher. It will hardly be credited, and yet it is true, that an analyst and observer

Gratification of the Reason. so acute as Kant fails to discern that "the gratification of the reason" involves the existence of one at least of the higher classes of sensibilities as springs or motives of action, implying the possibility of a peculiar kind of happiness, and this although immediately in this connection he observes that "the reason recognizes the establishment of a good will as its highest practical distinction, and in attaining this purpose is capable of *a satisfaction of its own peculiar kind*, viz.: that derived from the attainment of an end which again "is determined by the reason only, notwithstanding that this may involve many a disappointment to the ends of inclination." No language, it would seem, could be more explicit in asserting that the reason and "inclination" have each its appropriate sensibility, dependent on its special

conditions, indeed, and its peculiar laws, but both being capacities for emotion and involving enjoyment or suffering of differing kinds and degrees. There can be no escape from this interpretation, unless the satisfaction peculiar to reason is limited to that which follows voluntary action. But in such case it could not be brought into competition with inclination proper, and would have no meaning for Kant's argument. There can be no escape from the conclusion that Kant implicitly, if not avowedly, more than once recognizes a natural happiness which reason gives and which competes with inclination, even if he did not explicitly recognize the ethical principle of Aristotle, that one of the conditions of rational satisfaction is the attainment of the end or purpose of one's being, or the acting according to nature,—which last Kant uniformly interprets as involving empirical as opposed to ethical relations.

§ 31. The next topic which is discussed by Kant is the conception of duty. The first characteristic which he notices is that duty implies an activity of the will ^{Kant's} ^{Defective} ^{Conception} ^{of Duty and} ^{Obligation.} against conscious hindrances. It is a favorite and an oft-repeated doctrine of his that an act of duty must be positively indifferent or disagreeable to the natural sensibilities. He even formally

defines "Duty as a compulsion to a purpose or aim unwillingly adopted." Moreover, unless an act is performed from a sense or motive of simple duty, whether the person is or is not impelled by inclination, the act is not morally good. For this reason, those acts to which we are impelled by strong natural sensibility, may fail to be morally good in spite of this fact, and, in a sense, in consequence of it. All of which is true, but not for the reason given or assumed, that the element of sensibility is a vitiating element, but because it is the *voluntary element* alone which determines the moral quality of the action, not as antagonistic to sensibility of every sort, but as it selects between the lower or higher natural sensibility, *i.e.*, chooses between the higher and lower natural good. It is also worthy of notice that Kant fails altogether to discriminate between internal and external acts of duty, usually limiting duty to the latter, *i.e.*, to the *beneficent* act as contrasted with the *benevolent* volition — limiting the sensibility to acts only as thus defined and conceived, and appropriating the voluntary and responsible to the internal.

*Other
Oversights
of Kant.* In still further elucidation of his theory, he observes that right actions must "be done from duty, not from in-

elation," as though it were not equally true and no paradox to say, that if such acts were not done from inclination, *i.e.*, were not voluntary or volitionized, they would not be acts of duty at all.

Under the necessities of his theory, he does not hesitate to affirm that those passages in the Scriptures which command us to love our neighbor and even to love our enemy, do not respect the feelings or volitions of benevolence, but only the duties of beneficence, for the reason that love and forgiveness cannot be the subject of a command, practical and not pathological love alone being a matter of duty. We need use no words to explain how inadequate is this view of the reach and import of the moral law as explained in the Scriptures, which not only insist that love is the fulfilling of the law, but that if love is wanting, though every conceivable act of beneficence should be performed, not a single act of duty is done. The truth which misled the author is the commonplace truth that duty, if it be ethical and genuine, must show itself in acts, else it is hypocritical or hollow, and hence acts, as well as purposes and feelings, are insisted on as the external and bodily stuff of which duty is made and through which it is manifested. The truth which Kant caricatures is that the will, as distinguished

from the sensibility, is the only possible subject of the law of duty, and that what the sensibilities are in their impulsive energy and proportionate energy, depends partly on the individual temperament and culture. For this reason, and for this alone, the acts and not the feelings are the measures and practical tests of duty.

§ 32. Kant's *second* proposition concerning duty Kant's is, that it derives its moral worth, not *Second Error.* from the purpose or end which is to be attained by the act, but from the principle of the volition which pervades it. If he means that the actual fulfilment or execution of the volition does not decide its moral quality, he asserts an important truth, but if he means, as his words would imply, that the subjective moral character of the act of duty is not determined by what we objectively intend or morally prefer, he commits a serious speculative and practical error. The contrast which he sets up, between the principle of the will and the expected or chosen end in the act proposed or its result, cannot hold. To call the one formal and *a priori* and the other material does not avail except to the ear.

Kant's *third* proposition respecting duty is thus expressed: "Duty is the necessity of acting from

respect to the law." In this definition respect is opposed to inclination, the one being concerned with the regulation of the energy of the will, or the activity itself, and the other with the anticipated effect of an act. That respect on the one hand, and desire or inclination on the other, are properly contrasted we do not deny, but we deny altogether that respect is not *pathological* and emotional, albeit that both as sensitive and impulsive it is distinguished from the lower sensibilities. We dissent from Kant's assertion that we cannot have respect for a feeling or an inclination in ourselves and others, although we grant that, to become an object of respect, such a feeling must be vivified by the will and the product of self-command; but the response of respect which it exacts is none the less emotional in its nature.

§ 33. It is interesting to notice that at this stage of the development of Kant's theory, with the first introduction of an "*obscure feeling*," he recognizes the objection as possible that this respect for the law must in some sort be an "*obscure feeling*." This difficulty he attempts to evade by explaining the nature of the

Third
Mistake.
Respect for
the Law a
Sensibility.

feeling by the object which occasions it, as a concept of the reason, "the law only, and that the law which we impose on ourselves." All which does not tend to take respect out of the category of feeling, but only fixes it more firmly within it! Let it be observed here that it is with the subjective state of the man that we are concerned, not at all with the object which occasions it.

Leaving this difficulty unsolved, it being assumed that the law as such commands respect, our author proceeds to inquire. What kind of a law is that which is clothed with this moral authority? To this question he replies, Only a law which is fitted to be a universal maxim, *i.e.*, "I am never to act otherwise than so that I could will that my maxim should become a universal law." This position he illustrates at length in answer to the question whether it is ever right to make a promise with the intention never to keep it, giving a variety of reasons why any other rule of conduct than the one which in this case he approves would be unfit to be a universal law. These reasons we need not state. It is enough to say of them that they are all considerations of *compatibility or incompatibility with human well-being*. In this case at least, so far as the reasoning of the author has any

Criterion of
an Act of
Duty.

meaning, the fitness of a course of conduct to be a universal law is argued on grounds of its tendencies, or the consequences, good or ill, to the natural sensibilities, if the conduct supposed were occasionally or constantly put in practice. The self-asserting and self-asserted majesty of the law, which will bye-and-bye emerge in the autocratic grandeur of the categorical imperative, is here by the author's own showing represented as simply an appeal to that instinctive desire for or sympathy with universal well-being, which is supposed to be dominant in every human breast. In all this it is also assumed that the human reason discerns certain ends which are revealed in this constitution of man, individual and social, and which are capable of being recognized by every thinking being, as laws to his own will and to that of his fellow man. It also supposes that with the well-being of the universe and its necessary conditions every man has a disinterested sympathy, latent or active, and so becomes a lawgiver to himself as he interprets these ends and designs, and recognizes nature and God as imposing and confirming them as moral law. This law is eminently reasonable and self-confessed, and therefore is responded to with emotions of honor and respect, which are none the less sensibilities because

attended, when the reflecting judgment comes in.* with self-ministered and self-inflicted joys and pains.

§ 34. Thus far we have followed Kant in his attempt to effect a transition from the Second Section of Kant's "common rational knowledge" of morality to the philosophical, within the domain of common intelligence. We proceed next to the second section, in which he treats of the transition from the popular philosophy to the metaphysics of morals, proposing hereafter to interpret and criticise him point by point—changing our method to that of a running criticism.

The first position which Kant takes, and to the discussion of which he devotes several pages, is that no example of ideal moral perfection has ever been actually discovered in any single individual. He contends that not only has no perfect human being ever been known actually to exist, from whose example an ideal of moral excellence could be derived and by which it could be tested, but it may be questioned whether any (single) example of a single

* How he comes to be a lawgiver to himself and incidentally to others, we do not here inquire. It is enough that we know that the fact is unquestioned. We are only concerned here with the position that the respect which is exacted is a sensibility founded on the knowledge of the natural desirableness of that conduct which men call duty in feeling and in act.

perfectly morally good action can be found in the history of man. The inference suggested does not hold, even if the supposition be allowed. It is tenable only against the theory that the ideal of duty can only be derived from some example of its realization, which is very different from the position, that a moral ideal cannot be constructed or proposed from the actual facts, *i.e.*, the possibilities or constitution of human nature. It does not follow that the ideal of moral goodness is any the less actual as an ideal, or any the less excellent or desirable, because it may have never been realized, provided it be true that its elements are found in man's actual capacities. Its elements as an ideal may have been derived from human nature and verified in human experience, even though its realization may have never been observed or established as a fact. The only truth that we need to enforce is that the ideal of moral goodness is derived from reason and is proposed to and enforced upon the will. This ideal cannot, however, be proposed as an object of choice or action. Men choose objects, not volitions. Though the object of moral choice is related to the act by which it is chosen, the moral act itself is not chosen. Moral excellence does not lie in what is chosen, but in the act or response of choosing or the effect of having chosen. But whether act

or effect, in both cases it is subjective, however this actual or anticipated state may be related to its object, or color or affect that object.

The only question between Kant and his critics is, from what source is this moral ideal derived? This question Kant would answer by saying, From the reason only, by an imperative dictum proposed to the will. His critics would say, From a correct interpretation of the relations of the voluntary sensibilities to one another, as proposed to the will, through the respective objects which excite them.

Of this theory Kant takes a brief notice in passing, to return to it more fully at length, representing it as having been held under the titles of "the special distinction of human nature (including, however, the idea of a rational nature generally) at one time perfection, at another happiness, here moral sense, there fear of God, a little of this, and a little of that, in marvellous mixture, without its occurring to the upholders* of these theories to ask whether the principles of morality are to be sought in the knowledge of human nature at all (which we can have

* It may not be amiss to observe in passing that in none of his ethical writings does Kant evince an exact and critical knowledge of the writers whose systems he criticises, as those of Aristotle, Wolf, or Shaftesbury, although he prosecutes an active polemic against each of them in turn.

only from experience), or, if this is not so, if these principles are to be found altogether *a priori*, free from everything empirical, in pure rational concepts only and nowhere else, not even in the smallest degree," etc.

Not only does he express his dissatisfaction with these theories, but he shadows forth the outlines of his own as in his view altogether original. He repeats the injunction that a pure ethics must be constructed by reason alone, and, "unmixed with any foreign addition of empirical attraction," must give us "the pure conception of duty," and that "the conception of the moral law exercises on the human heart by way of reason alone an influence so much more powerful than all other springs which may be derived from experience." This prepares us for what follows.

Having made so much of reason, Kant very properly begins with a definition of reason and of rational beings in their ethical relations. Rational beings are such as have the power of acting according to laws as intelligently apprehended. To be able to act thus, man must be endowed with will. It deserves attention that Kant over-
looks the Sensibility as an Element of the Ideal.
Kant's conception of the will includes two elements only, Intelligence and Ac-

tion, overlooking any effect on the sensibilities as such, or any rational relations which pertain to the feelings, as a condition of action, or a criterion of character. What action is, *i.e.*, what ethical or responsible action is, he nowhere exactly defines. The term "action" is constantly employed, indeed, but action of what kind? Not bodily action, as it would seem, for in bodily action by itself there is no moral significance and can be no moral responsibility. Not intellectual action only, for here freedom has no place. Is it perhaps emotional action? Certainly it is not any mere passive sensibility. But no other is recognized in the Kantian analysis, the sensibility as such not being conceived as admitting of any voluntary direction or any rational *reasons* of higher or lower, and consequently of any ethical relations by being subject to the will.* Certainly the possibility of such a relation is at least ignored. Were this allowed, it would imply some possible relation of reason to the sensibility, and make right and wrong to depend on that blending of the rational and the

* It should never be forgotten that the will as conceived by Kant was the power to act, *i.e.*, the capacity for impulse or desire. To know, to feel, and *to act*,—internally as well as with the body—were the three functions of man which he recognized. The power *to choose* between impulsive sensibilities was not distinctly conceived by him as possible, hence his incapacity to recognize any conflict except a conflict between reason and feeling. Hence his paradoxical statement that the moral law respects the acts only, and not the feelings.

emotional, *i.e.*, of the *a priori* and the empirical, against which Kant constantly protests, as impossible, and under the rejection of which his theory constantly labors.

§ 36. After this imperfect analysis of the relation of the reason to the springs or impulses of action and of the nature of action itself, we are told, in the most general way, that right action is reason put in practice and that action or conduct controlled by reason is practical reason, reason being required not merely to apprehend whatever should be done, but to apprehend it in its principles. In case reason infallibly and actually determines the conduct, the actions made objectively necessary to the intellect are subjectively necessary to this will. That is, we suppose, the convictions of the reason actually control the impulses without conflict or friction, and the reasonable is actually responded to by the active impulses, called by Kant the will. But if the will is not thus subjectively determined by these objective conditions without conflict, the determination of such a will is *obligatory*. This can occur only when the sensibilities resist the reason. In case the sensibilities are reluctant, the objective principle becomes a command and the formula is imperative, all impera-

Right Action
Defined in the
Most General
way as Reason-
able Action.

tives being expressed by the word *ought*. Every imperative does indeed say that something would be good, were it done or not done, but it says this to a will which does not actually conform to the good as thus conceived. The obligatory, moreover, is distinguished from the pleasant, in that the pleasant influences the will only by means of sensations from merely subjective causes which are valid only for the sensibility of this or that individual, while the obligatory is recognized as a principle of the reason which holds equally for all men.

§ 37. A perfectly good will. Kant proceeds to expound, would invariably be subject to all the objective laws of the reason, but could not be conceived as *obliged* to act lawfully, because by its subjective constitution it is of itself already determined by the objectively good * without any counteracting impulses. No imperatives are possible, or have any significance for the desires of a holy will. The conception of obligation is here totally out of place, because such a will

A Perfect Will Excludes Obligation.

* It were better to say, and this would reconcile Kant with his dissenters and critics, that the moral imperative as imperative does not contemplate solely the anticipated sentient good, simply as good, but anticipates what the choice would be as morally good. But then, what would be chosen? not the choice, but the object of choice. But is the object chosen morally good, or is it the choice that is morally good?

is already in harmony or unison with the objective law and no conflict or dissent is conceivable.

§ 38. In order to enforce still further his conception of the authority of the moral law, ^{The Cate-} Kant introduces and expands the dis- ^{gorical and} ^{Hypothetical} tinction between the *hypothetical* and ^{Imperative} the *categorical* imperative. In the first case, the action concerned is a good as a means of something else; in the second, it is good in itself. In either case, it is a good which determines the will. It would seem that "the good in itself" and "the good with respect to something else" are tacitly conceived by the author as holding some sort of a relation to one another, else they would not be conceived as included under the common genus of a good or goods. If this were conceded, must not this generic conception be synonymous with the desirable in the largest or widest sense of the term, and if both objects are desirable must they not both in some way affect and move the sensibilities?

The distinction set up between the categorical and the hypothetical imperative is so obvious as scarcely to need comment or explanation. There are imperatives of skill, which simply require and in a sense command that if a man will accomplish a given purpose, he must gain some capacity by

training of the hand or of the eye. There is also a common end which may be supposed to be universal with all rational beings, and that end is happiness. For this reason the hypothetical imperative, whether in its narrow or more extended application, is expressed in the form of an assertion, rather than in that of command. Skill in the choice and use of means to this common end, *i.e.*, to man's highest well being, Kant contends, is prudence in a broader or a narrower sense. Distinguished from both of these, sharply and strongly, is the categorical imperative, which proposes certain actions (actions in the broadest sense of the term, as activities of feeling or will and even of disposition and character, and impulses and dispositions involving habits) without any condition in its implied or express reference to any end. This imperative, as Kant insists, concerns not any *matter* or any intended or implied result of an action, but only the form and principle of the action, *i.e.*, the intention or disposition itself, be its tendency or operation what it may. This imperative is the sole imperative which morality recognizes. Hence, in his view, we have three kinds of obligation, involving rules of skill, counsels of prudence, and laws of morality, the first two being conditional, and the last manda-

tory. The first two labor under the disadvantage that we cannot always satisfactorily determine the conditions of human happiness for ourselves or for others. To a greater or less extent, our conclusions in regard to them are conjectural and at the best are invested with a higher or lower degree of probability. But the mandates of duty are unconditional and imperative. The first say, Do this or that if you would be happy; the last, Do this because the act is reasonable, *i.e.*, is morally right, or, In the name of reason *do it*, or simply, *Do it*.

§ 39. This contrast between the two classes of imperatives is expanded by Kant at ^{Kant's} great length in illustrations which we ^{Defective} ^{Conception of} need not repeat. His argument is open ^{Happiness} to a single but important critical observation, viz.: That the author in his conceptions of possible and actual happiness confines himself altogether to the external consequences of actions and makes not the least recognition of that subjective good or happiness which attends the exercise of a voluntary impulse or feeling. Had he done justice to this distinction he would have found it easy to distinguish between prudence and morality in terms of volitionized sensibility — prudence respecting the external consequences of a volition, and morality the internal

affections. The possibility of any other terms of contrast seems not to have occurred to the author at this stage of his inquiries. He subsequently recognizes this possibility, but in the treatise before us, he finds no alternative possible except between the external reward of the virtuous will, which he limits to *the matter* of conduct, and the categorical command of the reason, which he terms *its form*, while the form contemplates rational or logical relations only.

As Kant proceeds with his argument in support of this contrast, he acknowledges that the difficulties thicken about him. He concedes that we cannot appeal to experience as our arbiter, because our convictions are not grounded in experience. But on the other hand, our conviction of the truth of this distinction is *confirmed* by human experience and is necessary in order that experience may be possible. Unless the categorical imperative were actually enforced, there could be none of that morality which we find to be both real and influential and necessary. But he reasons from the analogies of the speculative reason, that if *a priori* speculative principles must be assumed as the ground and explanation of speculative science, it is reasonable to suppose that ethics should rest in like manner on

ultimate *a priori* principles of its own. He urges that if we find it difficult to conceive the possibility of the one class of axioms, it ought to be no matter of wonder that the fundamental axioms of ethics should occasion equal and similar embarrassment, forgetting that the difficulties of speculative philosophy had already driven him, tentatively, at least, into the domain of the practical reason as a city of refuge, and that the axioms of morals had been accepted as truth and invested with a sacred and final authority in both spheres.

We have already adverted to the views of the relations between ethical and speculative science, which are conspicuously characteristic of Kant, and to the changes in these views which can be traced in his successive treatises. It is a matter of constant surprise that the unsatisfactory workings of his doctrine of the *a priori* ideas and principles of the speculative reason did not awaken the suspicion that the difficulties attendant upon the new set of similar principles which he provided for ethics might indicate some common weakness latent in both. It could give little satisfaction to Kant himself to confess that "the difficulty of discerning the possibility of the categorical imperative is a very profound one," and "it is an *a priori* synthetical

practical proposition, and as there is so much difficulty in discerning the possibility of speculative propositions of this kind, it may be readily supposed that the difficulty will be no less with the practical."

§ 40. But he proceeds to say, if we cannot explain the possibility of the categorical imperative, we can define its import, and this we find to be as follows: "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law," or, inasmuch as the laws by which effects are produced characterize nature, he amends it thus: "Act as if the maxims of thy action were to become by thy will a law of nature." Here we notice as before, that both in form and by every one of the examples employed in illustration, the tests of right conduct and of the law of duty are found by Kant in the effects of conduct or in the tendencies of conduct to affect human well-being, and that the euphemistic phrases of the fitness of a rule to become a universal law can signify nothing less than the tendencies of conduct with respect to individual and social welfare. Thus interpreted, *the form* of the moral law would respect the intentions or the voluntary purposes or the sensibilities as animated and controlled by the will, or as thus brought into

Kant Adopted the Criterion of Consequences as a Practical Rule.

mutual relations—these relations being always the same in matters which come under the categorical imperative, *i.e.*, which affect the disposition and the character, while *the matter* of human action, inasmuch as it pertains to the external and variable, the outward and prudential, is capable of founding only probable and proximate and to some extent variable rules of conduct.

After laying down the principle cited above, Kant proceeds to illustrate it by four examples. The first example is that of a man who is prompted by despair to commit suicide: the second, of one who under extreme necessity borrows money, falsely promising to repay it; the third, of one who wastes in self-indulgent sloth, superior capacities for usefulness to his fellow-men: the fourth, of a man who indulges selfish indifference to the miseries of mankind. The conduct of each of these persons is universally condemned as morally wrong, and why? Because it is not fitted to be a universal law; but why? Because of its more or less certain effects or tendencies, were it to be accepted and acted on by all men. That Kant should be so utterly unconscious of the logic of his own arguments is sufficiently surprising. It is still more strange that he should be totally unaware that in every one of the examples

which he cites, he makes use of "tendency to promote the general welfare" under the fair title of "fitness to be a universal law of nature." Similarly, in enforcing the duty of cultivating one's gifts, he urges that "as a rational being he necessarily wills that his faculties be developed, since they serve him for all sorts of possible purposes and have been given him for this end." The most superficial reader does not need to be told that here is an argument from the adaptations of nature with respect to the end for which man's endowments are given, which, as an ultimate ground of moral obligation, had already been formally repudiated by Kant as beyond man's capacity to decide or even to surmise.

Still more grossly does he offend against his professed principles and the entire spirit of his moral teachings, when in the fourth case supposed, he argues that a man cannot justify himself in indifference to the sorrows and wants of his fellow-men, for the reason that "a will that resolved this would contradict itself, inasmuch as many cases might occur in which one would have need of the love and sympathy of others and in which by such a law of nature, springing from his own will, he would deprive himself of all hope of the aid he deserves." How strangely do these words sound from Kant! What

a plump descent into selfish utilitarianism is made by the usually high-toned Kant! One would hardly have expected this of him. How singular that so acute a critic as Kant should first explain the tendency of sympathy to beget sympathy as a simple consistency of reason with itself, involving no relations of feeling! How unconsciously also does he descend from this thin air of his transcendental axioms into earthly considerations of self-regarding prudence, without being aware of the downward plunge, and least of all that he has substituted the impulse from self-interest or man's instinctive desire of happiness, for a harmony of reason with itself, which, if it means anything, can only be the logical law of identity!

§ 11. Thus far our philosopher persuades himself that he has been concerned with the ^{Relation of the} categorical imperative in its ideal nature, without deciding whether it is ^{Moral Ideal to} the Actual in man, ever actualized in man. And how does he decide this question? Not, as it would seem, by any inquiry of fact, but by some process or assumption *a priori*, lest the "critical method" should not be maintained. Kant does not hesitate to assert that what man is, whether he is, or is not, a rational or moral being, has nothing to do with deciding this question.

He contends most persistently that we may not assume that the essential constituents of manhood throw any light upon the essential elements of moral responsibility or the nature and grounds of moral obligation or the moral law. He urges that since moral laws ought to hold good for every rational creature, they must all be derived from the general concept of a rational being, "and in doing so, we must not make its principles," *i.e.*, the principles of the moral law, to be "dependent on the particular nature of human reason." What the author understood by this distinction between "the general concept of a rational being" and "the particular nature of human reason" is not so clear as it is that he intended to disparage and reject any analysis of the nature of man as the foundation of, or preliminary to, the determination of moral conceptions in general. We may presume that what he intends by the phrase, "the particular nature of human reason," is that modification of the rational powers which is occasioned by the emotions and their relations to the higher powers. What he would insist on is that moral law is the same for all moral beings, and that all moral beings have a common moral nature (*i.e.*, as he interprets this, a common rational nature), to the exclusion of whatever is peculiar to

the individual or the race, in the way of sensibilities or the relations which they involve. This may be admitted; but when he would leap to the conclusion that the moral relations are rational only, not merely in their form but in their matter, so that neither emotion nor will is required to constitute a moral being, he takes a leap in which few will follow him, and in which, as it would seem, on second thought he would scarcely follow himself. It would seem that no one would contend more earnestly than he that the moral law, as rational, must presuppose a will in every being over whom it has authority; and that without a will, whether in man or any other being, reason would neither discover nor enforce moral relations of any kind. But if a moral being must be endowed with a will, in order that it may be moral, why may it not be equally necessary that he should be endowed with sensibility also, and why may not the several sensibilities stand in certain natural, even rational, relations to one another, such as might be the conditions of the moral? Why, not only may it not be true, but why must it not be true, that a sensitive nature is the essential condition and medium for voluntary, *i.e.*, for moral, action and moral responsibility? Kant reasons well when he reasons that certain sensibilities, such as might be supposed

peculiar to human beings, are in no sense essential to moral responsibility, *e.g.* some of the human appetites or tastes, such as are dependent on the body or the special physiological constitution of the human race. But Kant reasons incorrectly when he excludes, as accidents of humanity and as non-essential to the discernment and enforcement of the moral law, every species of sensibility whatever as the possible subject of rational discrimination and moral relationship.

§ 42. Doubtless in this critical polemic Kant had in mind the definition given by *A Life According to the ancients of moral perfection as a Nature* *life according to nature*. He frequently criticises this doctrine and protests against it, as involving a limited or a varying standard and as inconsistent with his doctrine of the unconditioned and positive character of the practical reason. It would seem that he might have noticed the truth to which we have adverted, viz.: that in respect of moral relations, reason supposes sensibility and its relations, as truly as it does the will, and that without sensibility there can be no aim or purpose for reason in the practical sense of lawgiving end. Perhaps also—in all probability it was true in fact—what Kant had in mind in his protest against the

psychological study of human nature, was to express his dissent from the doctrines of the moral sense, as a mere accident of human nature, or an arbitrary element in its constitution, such as would make morality to be a matter of feeling or taste and in opposition to which he would set up the universal reason as the lawgiver of ethical truth and ethical authority; overlooking the fact that in doing this he must reduce reason to the mere relationships of formal logic, without any practical significance of value or worth.*

§ 43. And yet he cannot confine himself to these relationships. Sooner than he is aware, or rather without being aware of what he does, he finds himself following the method of a psychological analysis of the nature and processes of reason which he had seemed to set aside, and proposing to himself the question, Why must all rational beings judge of their actions by maxims imposed on themselves as universal laws? This question he answers thus: All

* The fact is worth noticing, that while Butler, on the one hand, insists as positively as does Kant that the distinctive feature of the moral faculty in man is its authority, he affirms as positively, on the other hand, that the moral relations are discovered by a reflective study of the nature of man. We may say that metaphysically Butler agrees with Kant, while psychologically he dissents from him most widely. (*Cf.* § 94.)

rational beings must not only approve as rational the means which are adapted to ends, but also the ends which these means subserve. In other words, the subjective grounds of rational actions are desires; their objective grounds are motives. The hypothetical imperative respects the means, the categorical, the ends of our actions. "All objects of the inclinations have only conditional worth." inasmuch as we might suppose these inclinations not to exist, in which case their objects would have no ^{Discover} worth. Rational beings are indicated ^{Ends of Action} by nature as being ends in themselves, and ^{Person-} ^{ality.} and are consequently called persons who can never be regarded as means only, but possess absolute and independent worth. An end in itself becomes invested with the authority of a categorical imperative, the foundation of which is the principle: "A rational nature exists as an end in itself," and from this the imperative follows: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of every other, in every case as an end, withal never as a means only,"— the postulate, as it would seem, being assumed that every rational being regards his existence as I do my own, and that, in the arrangements of nature and of rea-

son, the realization of the ends of each is compatible with the same by others.

The attentive and critical reader will not fail to have noticed that in these last assumptions Kant has abandoned forever the ground which he had taken in respect to the impossibility of deriving the categorical imperative from a critical examination of the constitution of man and the purposes of nature with respect to man as individual and social. In every one of these assumptions, on the other hand, he affirms the possibility that the ends provided in the constitution of every rational being should be discerned, as also the compatibility of the well-being or rational welfare of the individual with that of the community. In other words, Kant has returned to the doctrine of the ancients, that the moral law is summed up in the rule to act according to nature, and that man's nature can be discerned and interpreted, if, indeed, its supreme end and adaptations can be understood.

These postulates being assumed, we need not explain how they are applied in detail in enforcing special classes of duties. The examples selected by Kant for illustration are the same as those previously used, viz.: (1) The duty of rejecting suicide; (2) Of keeping one's promises; (3) Of living an

elevated personal life: (4) Of living a life devoted to the welfare of others. We need use no argument to show how the assumptions given above explain and enforce the several duties as they arise, and how they cannot be enforced without these, and how they are enforced by Kant himself after this very theory.

We agree altogether with Kant, that our faith in each of the several postulates which have been stated in respect to the constituents and the harmony of a universe of rational and voluntary persons, is an original and necessary belief. But we disagree altogether with him when he seems now and then to argue that our faith in these categories rests upon the authority of the practical reason as it commands this faith as a duty, except in the vague and popular acceptation, that every man acknowledges the intellectual supremacy of his rational convictions. The speculative and the practical reason cannot both be the ultimate foundations of our philosophical and ethical convictions, respectively, notwithstanding that Kant seems to interchange his allegiance to each, without being conscious of the incompatibility of making each in its turn the cornerstone of his philosophical creed.

In the present case he argues from the position,

that the principle that every human, and, indeed, every rational, being is an end in and for itself, is not borrowed from experience, but is an original and rational axiom. We agree with him in this, and also in the doctrine that this principle is essential alike to rational philosophy and sound ethics. We disagree with him in the occasional assertion, and in the general tendency of his argument, that this belief has its foundation, not in the speculative, but in the practical reason. From this rational postulate which we hold in common, it follows, that the ethical will or command of duty, which every man accepts and imposes on himself, is a universally legislative law, every moral agent being at once the giver and subject of the law as he imposes and accepts it for himself and also imposes it on and exacts it from every other rational being.

We may not conclude, as we have already intimated, that Kant, in using this language and availing himself of these relations, has formally abandoned his distinctive position, that the law of duty is a simple and categorical command, which never appeals to the speculative reason, and takes no account of the feelings or the relations which they involve, but is derived from the authority of the

But does not
Formally
Abandon the
Categorical
Imperative.

practical reason alone. On the contrary, he returns to it anew, and enforces it by additional arguments under a new appellation of the *autonomy of the will*, or the direct or sovereign authority of duty as a rational law, as contrasted with its heteronomy, or subjection to some other impulse besides itself. And yet here he insists as before that duty does not rest on the feelings or inclinations, but on the relations of rational beings to the end of their being and actions.

§ 44. In arguing from rational ends to personality, our author treads upon ground which is new to him, though not new to Aristotle or other philosophers who had recognized the ends of human nature as a fruitful and fundamental conception in ethical philosophy. But while he acknowledges the reality of *finality*, he does not, however, discuss its nature or its authority; he simply assumes its trustworthiness and its fruitfulness, without even recognizing the fact that in his speculative system it had previously met with a most inhospitable reception at his hands: his aim being apparently to reconcile it with the views which he had already expounded. He first reasserts that the will is conceived as a faculty of determining itself to action in accordance with the conception of

And yet He Practically Shifts His Ground.

certain laws. And such a faculty can only be found in rational beings. Then, for the first time in the treatise he says, "Now what serves the will as the objective ground of its self-determination is *the end*, and if this is assigned by reason alone it must hold for all rational beings." Here again we have either the studied or the unconscious assertion that if ends are rational and discerned by the reason they exclude all elements of feeling, and, it would seem, all appeals to the will. As if to secure this main position by every possible consideration, he makes a distinction between a spring or subjective ground of desire and a motive as an objective ground of volition, in order to enforce the distinction between subjective and objective ends, and again between practical precepts or motives as being *formal*, when abstracted from all subjective ends, and *material* when they assume and address such ends. He insists that all ends which are derived from the effects of actions are relative and occasion the hypothetical imperative, while all motives that have absolute worth suppose no springs of action or desire, but are simply rational and formal, and enforced by the categorical imperative. That there are such motives, he argues from the distinction between things which have "a relative value as means," and rational beings which

are "called persons" "because their very nature points them out as ends in themselves" having absolute worth. We assent to this distinction, and recognize its supreme importance in ethics, but we raise these questions: Whether a person who is an end to himself, for that reason finds no interest in the several ends, even the highest, which inspire his actions;—whether the fact that he assumes these ends to be final and supreme in the kingdom of ends, and is interested in them as such, is inconsistent with the fact, or rather explains the fact, that they are emphatically and supremely rational;—whether, on the contrary, the fact that they are rational does not arise from the fact that they are distinctively and emphatically moving of or motivating to the responsive sensibility; whether, in short, a rational nature, in the sense of an insensitive nature, can be an end to itself; and finally, whether the persistent attempts of Kant to interpret the rational as excluding the emotional are not invariably mere flights of language in the excitement of which the analyst leaves his logic behind.

We argue the question still further, whether the phrase, "a kingdom of ends," which is rightly conceived as a community of rational beings acting in

harmony with and subordination to one another, according to claims of duty and on grounds of duty—whether such a kingdom could be assumed unless the value and the worth of its constituent elements were capable of being translated into terms of feeling, *i.e.*, unless they interested the human sensibilities.

The further questions also suggest themselves. What is the relation of the will as autonomous, or self-law-giving, to the practical reason and its categorical imperative? Are the will and practical reason regarded by Kant as faculties of the soul, and if so, what are the appropriate functions of each? What are the relations of the motives which each is said to present as objective, when contrasted with the springs of action which are confessedly subjective? Can there be a moving object, whether sensitive or rational, which does not also arouse or interest the feelings, and if so, is not the contrast between the higher and lower motives to be found solely in the natural quality of the emotions and desires which they excite, as also in the results which they accomplish, and consequently in their relative value, involving their natural and moral worth?

§ 45. What are Kant's views of the will in these applications it is not easy to determine. We

Kant's Views of the Will Indefinite. ask, again and again, Does he mean by the will an endowment or faculty of human nature coördinate with the reason or the intellect, and possibly—why not?—with the sensibility, or does he absorb the reason into the will by making the person to be the reasonable will, and leave the sensibility unconsidered at all, regarding it as a pariah in the spiritual organism of forces and ends? The latter seems to be the view which he would take. That he usually connects and almost blends the reason with the will is evident from the terminology and logic of his argument. As we have already noticed, the will, whose autonomy and heteronomy he discusses, is another name for the moral person as self-regulating in the one instance, *i.e.*, as finding the moral law in his own internal constitution, whatever that may be; or, in the other, as deriving both law and impulse from any source motives which may address some inferior sensibility. The use of this peculiar phraseology adds nothing to his argument, and it need detain us no longer than to direct the attention to the singular indefiniteness of meaning which Kant attaches to the term "will," and by which he mystifies his reader without adding either to the clearness or the force of his own theory.

It is not exactly true or just to say that Kant

finds no reason for using the phrase, "the heteronomy of the will," inasmuch as under this general title he subjects to a brief review the several theories of morals in which he finds this doctrine to be exemplified. All these theories in his view are either empirical or rational, the first being founded on simple feeling, either physical or moral, or the principle of happiness; and the last on the principle of perfection, either as a rational conception of a possible ideal, or as exemplified in or enforced by the will of God. Under the first is classed the theory of ultimate happiness and the theory of the moral sense; under the second, the theories of perfection as a rational conception and as divinely commanded. Of the ultimate grounds of obligation which he thinks are found in each of these pairs of theories, the author rejects the doctrine of ultimate happiness as being selfish and arbitrary, for the reasons already given. The theory of a moral sense he rejects as dependent on an arbitrary constitution, though he lauds it as unselfish, while the theory of the divine command he condemns as being arbitrary and changeable.

Here the author ends his argument, having proved to his own satisfaction that the universally received

doctrines of practical morality imply the *categorical imperative* and the *autonomy of the will*. These two metaphysical foundations of morals he accepts as established by this analysis.

§ 46. We have already in passing noticed the objections which might be urged to the use of these and kindred phrases, in place of the personal Ego, which in our view can alone be accepted as the moral lawgiver over the individual will, or can enforce the moral law of the consenting universe. The scepticism and denials of Kant's speculative theory in respect to *noumena*, both material and psychical, had unfortunately cut him off from the possibility of recognizing the personal Ego as anything more than a logical fiction, and the attempt to find a substitute for it in the categorical imperative of the practical reason can only be regarded as a logical makeshift such as might give plausibility to the platitudes of a sentimental morality or the Protean forms of some imaginative metaphysical hypothesis.

The unsatisfactory character of the new elements in Kant's system, which we have noticed, is made especially manifest in his attempts to solve the four practical questions which he had previously proposed. Kant's second attempt to answer these

questions in the terms of his enlarged theory decisively proves that what he calls rationality and the doctrine of ends involve sensibility, and that the highest ends always imply the demands of the noblest feelings—in short, that worth and value are terms which can have no import, unless the emotions are appealed to.

In the *third* or last section, Kant attempts to effect a transition from the Metaphysics of Morals to the Critique of Practical Reason. That is, he attempts to show how the conceptions which he thinks he has discovered to be essential to moral science as such, may be justified by a critical examination of the *Practical Reason*. By the practical reason he must understand the human intelligence as concerned with ethical conceptions, or the reason so far as it deals with human action. It will be remembered that Kant has hitherto persistently refused to find in the constitution of human nature the ultimate explanation for ethical phenomena or ethical ideas, for the reason that this process would seem to found scientific truth, which in its nature is permanent and universal, upon what might be considered as the arbitrary and mutable constitution of man. As contrasted with this source of knowledge

and its results, Kant proposes the critical method, which should test the pure rational faculty by means of its products in human knowledge, and infer the nature and authority of human reason from these products. Kant's problem would be as follows: Given a certain kind of knowledge as trustworthy and universally accepted, to examine its elements or products and find in them a method for interpreting these truths and the warrant for accepting them. Now, we find in science of every kind, and, indeed, in all human experience, certain postulates and assumptions which command intellectual confidence and give law to human action. In these conceptions and principles we find the vouchers for our interpretation of the merit and authority of human reason, both speculative and practical; the speculative reason giving us the norms and principles of speculative science, and the practical the faiths which command and control our conduct. If now our critical analysis of the metaphysical conceptions of ethics is correct, we shall learn what are the axioms and what is the nature of the practical reason. There are not two Reasons in man, he graciously informs us, however. Though we speak of the Speculative and the Practical, the two are one and the same, and the principles of the one must be

assumed to be consistent, if they are not identical, with those of the other. Hence our question is legitimate, "How can we effect a transition from the metaphysical conceptions of morals as we find them in human experience, to a critical and scientific knowledge of the intellect?" It should not be forgotten here that Kant had already subjected the scientific reason to a critical examination in his first famous Critique, and had also written his confident, if not defiant, Prolegomena to All Future Metaphysics. It ought not to surprise us that he should imagine that these inquiries had already determined the reach and trustworthiness of the same reason when applied to ethical distinctions, and that he should use their results to solve the difficulties and answer the inquiries which he might encounter in his analysis of ethical or practical phenomena. We shall find that his explanations are not wanting in ingenuity, even if they fail to produce conviction.

§ 47. Kant begins with the concept of the Will and its freedom as the ground of its autonomy. He finds that the will is a causality peculiar to rational beings in being free from, or independent of, any agency foreign to itself. This definition of freedom is negative, however, and yet it involves the consequence

Kant Returns
to the Will
and Moral
Freedom.

that the will is a law to itself, finding the reasons for its action in its own nature. An absolutely good will, moreover, is that whose maxim or actually accepted rule or principle of action may always be regarded as a universal law for all rational beings, every one of whom is also assumed to be free.

But every such being, so far as he is rational, must also take an *interest* in duty, in order to respond to its claims. As a sensitive being, he should also have an interest in the actions which duty commands, but the two interests are of a different sort. The one of these interests, however, does not exclude the other, the obligatory* not being incompatible with the desirable.

The next point which is made by Kant is, that while we are not directly conscious of freedom as a psychological fact, and cannot *in this way* prove it to be an endowment of ourselves or others, or of human nature, there are reasons why we must yet assume it to be a universal endowment of ourselves and our

* Here the critical inquirer would doubtless interpose with the question, whether the response of the will to the imperative of the reason, or to the original motive which is the ground of the moral command, may not and must not be a response of feeling. This last, we have already seen, Kant positively and pertinaciously denies, saying, If reason recognizes or enforces any motion of sensibility, it can no longer be reason, and if it appeals to desire, it will no longer be an imperative.

fellows. It is not interested feeling alone which urges me to action, but there is an obligation to take an interest, an *ought* which every rational being must acknowledge. This holds for every rational being so far as reason influences or controls his acts. For all those beings who, like men, are also endowed with sensibility, and in whom there is not a ready response to reason, *but a reluctant sensibility*, this objective rational necessity becomes an *ought*, implying a *can*, while the subjective necessity (*e.g.*, of the sensibility) differs from the objective. These Kant bids us take as ultimate facts, though we cannot explain them.

It is true that Kant here concedes that we can and do take an interest in our own personal attainments, *i.e.*, "We can be interested in being worthy of happiness without the motive of participating in the happiness." And yet, this experience, and the prospect of it, is only an attestation of that human weakness under which we are not, and cannot be, independent of all consideration of happiness. Kant is also aware that here is a circle from which it is not easy to escape. It is the old difficulty of conceiving that the action which is worthy of happiness should not of itself be regarded as desirable, and thus become an object of desire at the same time

that it is clothed with obligation. So, also, he admits that in the order of ends and adaptation we may conceive ourselves subject to moral law, because we are convinced that we are free.

§ 48. From this dilemma we may perhaps deliver
The Man ourselves by asking whether it does not
Noumenal arise from our looking at the same sub-
and Man ject from different points of view — *i.e.*, as
Phenomenal. we consider ourselves as phenomenal so far as ob-
jects affect us, *i.e.*, move our sensibilities, but as
things in themselves, so far as we respond to the
moral law — and whether the same object-matter
may not at one time address the feelings and at
another the reason. He avers that "We can
never know objects speculatively as they are in
themselves, but only as they affect us"; while
yet "Man must necessarily suppose something
else as their basis, namely, his Ego, whatever its
characteristics in itself may be. * * * In respect
to perceptions and the receptivity of sensations,
he may reckon himself as belonging to the world
of sense; but in respect to his pure activity, and
that which reaches consciousness immediately and
not through the affections of the senses, he must
reckon himself as belonging to the intellectual
world, of which, however, he has no further knowl-

edge" than that *it is* a fact. "Now man finds in himself a faculty by which he distinguishes himself from everything else, even from himself as affected by objects, and that is reason." It follows that a rational being regards himself and all his actions from two points of view: "First, so far as he belongs to the world of sense and finds himself subject to the laws of nature (this being *heteronomy*); secondly, as belonging to the intelligible world, under laws which, being independent of nature, have their foundations, not in experience, but in the autonomy of the reason only." So far as we conceive ourselves free, we transfer ourselves into the world of understanding, and recognize the autonomy of the will; whereas, so far as we consider ourselves as under obligation, we regard ourselves as belonging to the world of sense, but also to the world of understanding, the sensibility resisting and the reason commanding. Now, it is evident if there were two worlds, of sense and understanding respectively, they could have no common relations and no bond of connection whatever. "Since, however, the world of understanding contains the foundation of the world of sense, and consequently of its laws also, and accordingly gives laws to the will," the reason, here called the understanding, assumes the right to command

the sense-impulses by the categorical imperative. Here we encounter the reason, viz.: the practical reason, with its synthetic imperative *a priori*. It should be remembered, however, that obligation presupposes the reluctant impulses of sense, and so in every case there must be conflict between the two, since obligation can only be felt when the autonomous will encounters the resisting sensibility. It is not to be forgotten, however, that the reason not only asserts its natural authority as reason over sense, but that, as this authority is responded to as a fitness to be a universal law, it awakens the feeling of respect, it being always remembered, however, that the relation of fitness to control precedes and occasions, but never follows, the feeling of worth or desirableness.

§ 49. It should also be observed that the freedom of the will, according to Kant, is not psychologically conceived as the capacity to choose between two or more objects which address the sensibilities, but *signifies only that freedom from the impulses of the feelings, which necessarily belongs to any act which responds to the commands of reason*. The will itself is the capacity to respond to these commands, independently of, *i.e.*, with freedom from, the impulses of sense. The evidence for the reality of freedom is found

Kant's
Freedom
Still More
Exactly
Defined.

not in the testimony of consciousness, but solely in the fact that it is implied by the commands of reason, and is accepted by the mind as an *a priori* truth.

The order of thought by which this freedom is assented to, and the subject-matter of which it is affirmed, may be thus stated. The practical reason proposes to the will a maxim that is fit to be a universal law. The man addressed, so far as he is reason, assents, therein exercising his practical capacity to know things as they are, and hence the law is invested with final and supreme authority. So far as the sensibility is concerned, it apprehends and assents to objects as they affect the feelings, the objects varying with the varying sensibility which they address. Hence the man oscillates between the proper self, the self of the reason, and the self of the sensibilities, the noumenal and the phenomenal. The reason, however, has no proper knowledge of entities in a positive form, such knowledge being limited to the senses, the reason presupposing another order of existence, which is supersensible, and by this very circumstance is exempt from the law of cause and effect.

It would seem from this statement that reason gives the knowledge of things in themselves so far as that they exist, but gives us no knowledge of what

they are, because this would imply a knowledge of the laws under which they act as phenomena, in obedience to the relations of cause and effect. This apparent contradiction was recognized by Kant, but he attempts to set it aside by the consideration that behind the appearance or the phenomena of the sensibility, as obeying the law of natural causation, there must lie at their root (though hidden) the things in themselves, which we cannot expect will be governed by the same laws.

§ 50. While thus Kant cannot and does not profess to explain the freedom of the will any further than by showing that it is not impossible, he urges that we cannot explain another fact equally undeniable, *i.e.*, the fact that the moral law affects the sensibilities of men. That man takes some interest in this law he does not deny, although he rejects the doctrine, in whatever form it may be held, that this interest is the foundation of the moral judgments, or their authority. He insists, however, that the reason has the power to infuse a pleasure into the soul at the fulfilment of duty, *i.e.*, directly to affect the sensibility painfully or pleasantly. How this can be he does not explain. Indeed, he asserts that such a fact must be inexplicable (*i.e.*, the fact that

Kant Concedes that the Moral Law Affects the Sensibilities.

a thought can awaken pleasure or pain). The existence of such a causal power is itself incapable of any solution. The only suggestion which he can give is that the sensibility, with the phenomenal in general and all its relations, is necessarily subordinated to the thing in-itself and its possible relations. And yet of the thing-in-itself with its interior and exterior relations, we confessedly know nothing beyond the phenomenal effects in which it is manifested under the laws of cause and effect. It were most presumptuous, however, he suggests, for us to assert that it has no other laws than these. The authority of the moral law, the suitableness of its maxims to be universal, the reasonableness of "a kingdom of ends," all require the reality of moral freedom as their subjective counterpart.

He urges that these ultimate facts in the actual or possible constitution of things must all be assumed. They cannot be explained, but they are themselves necessary in order to explain the phenomena of human experience. It cannot be reasonably urged against them, that they are unconditioned or independent, for wherever we go we must encounter certain ultimate facts or truths, whether these are found in the will of the Creator, the constitution of things, or the behests of reason. Similarly, Kant

would say that he refers us to the practical reason as the ultimate and the unconditioned moral element in the careful critique of which he expects to find the solution of all the problems of ethics, as by the examination of the pure reason he had essayed to explain the ultimate asseverations of speculative truth.

Here he leaves us, at the end of his attempt to bring into distinct apprehension and bold relief the principal metaphysical concepts which are at the foundation of ethical science. These concepts, thus developed by the analytic method, he proposes subsequently to explain by a critical examination of the practical reason, which should render a service to ethics similar to that which he had hoped to derive from the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the interest of speculative science.

The conclusion which he reaches, and in which he rests for the time, is the following: Though we cannot explain or reconcile the ultimate concepts or assumptions of the practical reason and the science of ethics, we can explain their *incomprehensibility*. This incomprehensibility is similar to that which had been reached in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as characteristic of the principles of speculative science. It arises from the axiomatic or dogmatic

character of certain irreconcilable or unadjustable *a priori* elements, all of which must necessarily be assumed in order to explain the possibility of human experience—the experience in the one case being the experience of knowledge, in the other the experience of duty.

Whether the Critique of Practical Reason, when prosecuted, will fulfil the anticipations of its author, whether it will be equally successful with this preliminary essay on the Metaphysics of Morals, or more so, remains to be seen. We must look forward with interest to its solution of the problem which it has imposed upon itself, viz.: to find in the postulates of the practical reason not merely the synthetic principles *a priori* which shall serve as a foundation for ethical science, but which shall also, through ethics, perform the additional service which the Critique of Pure Reason has shown to be so necessary, and yet so impossible, for speculative philosophy.

CHAPTER III.

THE CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON.*

§ 51. The reader of the preface to this treatise ^{Preface and} should not fail to keep in mind the fact ^{Introduction.} that it was published seven years after the Critique of the Pure Reason, and three years after the Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals. Its author might very reasonably suppose that his readers were familiar with both these treatises, and the place of each in the development of his philosophical system. The remarks made in both preface and introduction are obviously designed to recall distinctly, and to reimpress forcibly the conclusions which he supposed himself to have reached, involving, as the attempt necessarily did, a short review of his entire system, and a series of short and sharp statements of its distinctive principles. No one who reads these two papers attentively can doubt what his leading positions were in respect to the most important questions which he had proposed to consider and answer.

* *Die Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft.*

He begins by explaining why he entitles the present treatise the *Critique of the Practical Reason*, and not the *Critique of the Pure Practical*, not *Pure* and *Practical*. Reason, and gives the following: That if there is or can be a reason that is truly practical, it must necessarily be pure, that is *a priori* in its positions, inasmuch as it must begin with an ultimate, actual fact, *the fact of freedom*, and this in its very nature is involved in an unconditioned and an unconditional imperative. Now, the *Critique of the Pure Reason*, the author proceeds to urge, has shown by its analysis of all higher human knowledge that it must involve an *a priori* element, called the unconditioned. And yet of this *a priori* element, the speculative reason does not and cannot affirm objective reality.

Quare, here and always: Why does it not? Does it not in fact? Why does not the analysis which shows the unconditioned to be subjectively necessary in order to the completion and trustworthiness of human knowledge, and particularly of human science—why does not this very analysis involve and justify the belief that this, being unconditioned, is also an objective fact?

But it being assumed that this essential *a priori* element must be furnished, we find that it is sup-

plied by the practical reason, viz.: the element of freedom, which, speculatively or in its scientific or philosophical relations, is the unconditioned, since it is ideally involved in the categorical imperative of duty. But freedom (if not ideally, at least practically) implies God and immortality, if it is to be accepted as a fact. Hence we have the basis of all *a priori* knowledge in that unconditioned fact of freedom which is implied in the moral law, inasmuch as the elements of trustworthy speculative knowledge rest on faith in duty, this being given as objectively true, with the subjective freedom which it implies. That which was a problem becomes an actual fact — amplifying itself as the Soul, God, and Immortality. In this way, through the medium and by the authority of the practical reason, we establish the authority of these speculative ideas of the pure reason.

Moreover, we explain by means of our critical analysis of the speculative reason, why the practical reason should be able to supply to the speculative an element which it confesses to be wanting to itself. The Critique of the Pure Reason has shown that two kinds of knowledge are supposable, viz.: the knowledge of phenomena, *i.e.*, of things as conditioned by sense-forms, the categories, and in a certain sense

The Practical
Reason
Supplies an
a priori
Element

by ideas—*i.e.*, the knowledge of things as they appear—and the knowledge of nonmena, *i.e.*, of things as they really are. This last confessedly cannot be gained by the speculative reason, but if it can be assured by the practical reason, this last consequently deserves to be accepted as pure so far as it is practical, and because it is practical.

To the analysis of the practical reason as thus outlined, the author adds that his previous treatises are preliminary, both the speculative and the practical—the speculative as justifying the critical method and its postulates, and the ethical as defining or vouching for its subject-matter. Under the first are included the famous Critique and the Prolegomena, and under the last the Metaphysics of Morals.

§ 52. He notices, next in order, a criticism of this last work which he deems worthy of his Reply to a attention, viz.: that he did not begin his Criticism. discussion with a definition of good, and also that he did not define the faculty of desire. The objections of the critic seem to us well taken, and to spring into the face of the writer at almost every turn of the subsequent discussion. We shall have frequent occasion to refer to both as we proceed, and therefore say here only in passing, that the attempt of Kant to meet these objections seems to increase

rather than relieve the difficulty. The objections seem to strike the key-note of the error which pervades his entire theory of the relations of the sensibility to the will, and of both to the intellect (or moral reason, as it is often called) in its ultimate ethical concepts and judgments. To this error we have had occasion previously to advert, viz.: the error that because the experiences of feeling and of voluntary affection are in their very nature personal and empirical, they cannot hold any relations to the will or to one another, inasmuch as the voluntary are rational and permanent, and involve authority and obligation. The grossness of this error is manifest in the absurdity of Kant's attempt in the note, to define desire and pleasure by merely intellectual concepts and rational relations. We notice this error at the outset, and forewarn the reader that it will be repeated in form or in fact scores of times in the treatise. For the present he must content himself as well as he may with the following: "The faculty of desire is the being's faculty of becoming by means of its ideas the cause of the actual existence of the objects of these ideas." Our objection to this would be that it does not conform to the facts of conscious experience. It seems but little better than trifling to say

that in desire the soul by means of *its ideas* becomes the cause of the objects of these ideas. One does not need to be told by Kant that this definition, with others, "is composed only of terms belonging to the understanding, *i.e.*, of categories which contain nothing empirical." So much for the preface. The remaining topics, though instructive and interesting, do not relate to Kant's Ethics, directly or indirectly, and are beside our purpose.

§ 53. In the brief introduction which follows, two points deserve special attention in the two-fold function which the author ^{Two-fold Function Ascribed to the Will.} asserts for the will. According to the first, "the will is a faculty either to produce objects corresponding to ideas," or, according to the second, "to determine ourselves to the effecting of such objects (whether the physical power is sufficient or not)." This twofold definition is not unfamiliar in our English nomenclature, as *first*, the capacity to accomplish physical effects of any kind, either muscular or corporeal in ourselves or others, in the world of matter with which our bodies are connected, or even in the world of spirit, so far as other spirits are subject to any agency of our own; and *second*, the capacity to produce effects which are

purely spiritual and in the domain of feeling, by a direct energy of volition.

According to Kant, the agent in either case is not the will, but reason — reason being conceived of as the agent which acts on the will, and in one of the two ways, either under "empirical conditions," as when motives of sense or desire solicit or take possession of the will, or when the motive or command of duty appears as the categorical imperative, in some empirical form indeed, or, we should say, in some concrete example, but still as exemplifying some relation of duty. But this command of reason supposes freedom, or the capacity of unconditioned action. What this freedom is, as a psychological endowment or act, Kant does not attempt to explain. He does not even affirm it of the will as a power to choose, and scarcely recognizes the will as a faculty of the soul at all. He discusses freedom, not as pertaining to an activity of the spirit, but simply as involving a special metaphysical relation of ideas, giving the unconditioned in objective thought.

The recognition of this double aspect or effect of the will's supposed response to reason, either in internal, *i.e.*, ethical, results, or in those which are bodily and mechanical, is most important, and it is surprising that more of it is not made by Kant.

The oversight is but one of many examples of his neglect of the psychological aspects of his themes in favor of the metaphysical. We note a still more serious defect in his failure to see that reason may be as truly a moving and constraining force with the freely acting will, when it addresses the feelings and urges the claims of the sensibilities, as when it confronts the will with what Kant calls ideas, or the commands of the reason. As we have already intimated, the assumption is utterly unwarrantable on which Kant's entire theory rests, that the feelings, as related to one another and to the highest and best achievements of man, are empirical as contrasted with the truly rational. Moral freedom, or what Kant calls the unconditioned, is just as compatible with those rational concepts of the natural or pathological feelings which the moral will can make supreme, as with those concepts which are derived from intellectual objects or their relations.

§ 54. The indefinite and vacillating conceptions of Kant in respect to this topic can only be explained by the fact that in his times, and even since, the will has been conceived and defined in so indefinite and vacillating a fashion. The powers of the soul have often been held to be only two, viz.: to Know

Vacillating
and Uncertain
Classification
of the
Psychical
Powers

and to Feel, while under feeling has been included every state that has to do with action, whether internal or external. When an improvement has been made upon this classification, and a threefold division introduced, founded on "to Know, to Feel, and to Act," as three separate functions, great indeterminateness has still been attached to the meanings of both feeling and action. It has not been decided whether desire belonged partly or wholly to action, or whether it partly pertained to feeling and partly to will. Those who denied freedom, or did not emphasize freedom, have made desire equivalent to action or impulse. Even since the three designations, to Know, to Feel, and to Choose, were introduced, to Know and to Will have been recognized as the two leading powers, and at times have pre-occupied for analysts the entire psychical arena.

§ 55. It is also worthy of notice, as essential to a correct interpretation of Kant's reasoning, that Kant's use of the word "will" is conspicuously indefinite and variable. Now he seems to make it the capacity for ethical choice, whether as a special form of psychological activity which is purely spiritual, or whether it passes over into a corporeal effect. Then again, which is still more surprising, he represents the

Kant's
Indefinite
Conceptions
of the Will.

will as the giver or enforcer of the moral law, as when he speaks of it as the autonomous, as contrasted with the heteronomous will, making it synonymous with the practical reason — now the giver of and then the respondent to the law of one or both. In this brief introduction a distinction is made between "the empirically conditioned reason," on the one hand, "claiming exclusively to furnish the ground of determination of the will," and the "pure reason," on the other. This can only be understood by apprehending the different senses in which the term "reason" is used, prominent among which is the sense in which it is used as the lawgiver to the moral, *i.e.*, the free will, which again is distinguished from the sensibility with its strong impulses, passionately and passively yielding to the excitements of sense.

In the conclusion of his brief introduction, the author adds an important remark, the full import of which might easily escape the attention of the reader. He says: "The order in the subdivision of the analytic will be the reverse of that in the Critique of the Pure Speculative Reason. For in the present case we shall commence with the principles and proceed to the concepts, and only then, if possible, to the senses; whereas, in the case of the

speculative reason," *i.e.*, as analyzed in his famous Critique, "we began with the senses, and had to end with the principles."

§ 56. This remark of Kant suggests the inquiry whether knowledge of every kind, beginning with the sense-perceptions and ending with the intuitions of the reason, is not invariably first given to the mind in the form of *propositions or principles*, which are subsequently analyzed into percepts, concepts, or ideas; and whether the sceptical distrust with which Kant invested all the processes of the speculative faculty, and which he seeks to overcome by such manifold and unnatural ways of resort to the practical reason, would not have been rendered unnecessary by the distinct recognition, on his part, of the truth which he limits to the practical reason, viz.: that knowledge of every kind is originally given in the form of judgments, involving the concepts, which are expressed in propositions by manifold relations. These relations, when subsequently analyzed and generalized by the critical judgment, are revealed as the *a priori* bonds by which concepts are united, and these, again, are mentally isolated and analyzed as forms of sense, categories of the understanding, and ideas of the reason, which are also

Knowledge of Every Sort Begins with Jndgments. not Concepts.

assumed psychologically as the subjective conditions, and metaphysically as the objective forms of all human knowledge. Such a correction of Kant's theory would justify our confidence in the speculative reason, and might have saved Kant the necessity of resorting to the practical reason as a make-weight or a make-shift for his imperfectly or *mis*-conceived pure reason.

§ 57. Following Kant still further, we find that the first chapter of the Critique treats of the principles of pure practical reason, and begins with a definition of practical principles, as "propositions which contain a general determination of the will, having under it (itself) several practical rules." The phrase *allgemeine Bestimmung des Willens* is sufficiently abstract and indefinite. It certainly does not mean a moving force or agency which actually effects a right or wrong condition of will, and we conclude that it must signify any accepted maxim or rule which characterizes or defines the will as morally good or evil, *i.e.*, in a general way, admitting, of course, sundry subordinate particulars, or varieties of individual character. Or more exactly, it is any universal rule which by being adopted expresses the moral character of the will.

The remark appended, that some motive to such a

state or activity of the will must always be assumed to be possible, is unquestionably correct.

§ 58. The added remark that such a motive must address the reason only, as contradistinguished from the feelings, *i.e.*, must be the Reason.

Every Motive must Address the Reason. rational as contrasted with the pathological, implies that a motive furnished by reason must exclude the feelings as such, or any relations to them. We have already observed that such an assumption or assertion would be emphatically rejected by many of Kant's critics. No one, however, would deny for this reason that certain practical principles are universal, inasmuch as all would contend that it is always reasonable that the lower natural feelings should give way to the higher, as also the injurious to the beneficent. All men would also assert that physical laws differ from moral laws, and that moral laws are in their nature imperative, though on a different theory from Kant's. All will agree with him that the moral law is both internal and external, that is, determines or commands both the internal state of the will and the bodily or external actions which the will controls. Certain moral laws are also categorically imperative so far as they suppose certain conditions to be common to all men, and concern themselves with those internal

states of the will which are within the reach of all men. So far as it may be supposed that the conditions which respect the outward conduct are variable, the moral law proper concerns itself universally with the internal states of the will, and with them only. So far as these purposes or feelings require a single course of action, so far is the rule of action uniform and fixed. In all these general positions the practical theory of Kant may be accepted by those who reject altogether his doctrine of a blind categorical imperative which assumes dictatorially to guide and control the moral reason.

In Theorem I, we find the following: "All practical principles which presuppose an object of the faculty of desire as the ground of the determination of the will are empirical, and can furnish no practical laws." Two reasons are given for this position: *First*, The desire precedes the rule, and is founded on a pleasure actually experienced. Now, it is impossible to know beforehand what any pleasure will be, and consequently we must try a pleasure before we prescribe a law for or against it. To this we reply: The law of duty prescribes an affection as voluntary, in comparison with some other one or more affections also voluntary, *i.e.* an affection of some class, in competition with one of

Empirical
Principles
Defined.

another as a class. On any theory, it supposes we know the natural excellence or desirableness of such affections. It supposes this even on the theory of the categorical imperative, which commands the act, as distinguished from a feeling, *i.e.*, makes it morally binding because by some sort of experience it knows it to be naturally good, *i.e.*, *fit to be a universal rule*. The first experience in the order of time is that an action, say, of love or pity or self-sacrifice, is naturally good. The knowledge of this natural excellence is derived from some source before it is enforced by a moral command. Kant says, indeed: "It is impossible to know *a priori* of any idea whether it will be connected with pleasure or pain, or be indifferent." That is true, and for this very reason we must wait till we know whether it is connected with pleasure or pain, either by empirical experience or by testimony, before we can decide whether it comes under the law. If this is so, why then must or may we not know the relations of actions empirically before we know them morally, or, as Kant would say, before we know them formally?

He adds in the *second* place, that pleasure and pain cannot hold in the same degree for all rational beings, and hence cannot be the foundation of a law.

We answer: If they do not hold in the same degree, that is, are not equally intense or strong, they can be the same to all men in their relative natural value so far as quality is concerned, *i.e.*, natural quality. Otherwise the beings concerned with them do not belong to the same species, and consequently cannot in any sense accept the same moral law on grounds of reason. In Kant's terminology, unless the relations of the empirical endowments of men are the same, their moral relations could not be formally the same, inasmuch as the formal cannot be known in psychological experience, except as it is exemplified in the empirical, *i.e.*, cannot be proposed as a rule or standard, except it presents an ideal which has relations to the actual nature of the being on whom and by whom it is self-imposed.

§ 59. Theorem II. is that "all material practical principles, as such, are of one and the ^{Material} same kind, and come under the general ^{Practical} ^{Principles} principle of self-love or private happiness." ^{Defined.}

In support of this position he contends that there is no distinction possible between the desires, as higher and lower; that the reason, as an impulse or a motive, neither appeals to nor satisfies any desires whatever, and, moreover, that pure reason "must

be able to determine the will by the mere form of the practical rule, without supposing any feeling." But he adds: "Then only when reason itself determines the will (not as the servant of the inclination), is it really a higher desire, to which that which is pathologically determined is subordinate, and is really and even specifically distinct from the latter, so that even the slightest admixture of the motives of the latter impairs its strength and superiority"; and still more positively: "Reason, with its practical law, determines the will immediately, not by means of an intervening feeling of pleasure and pain, not even of pleasure in the law itself; and it is only because it can, as pure reason, be practical that it is possible for it to be legislative."

These assertions need no comment except to refer the reader to the concession made by Kant in the passage cited above, that reason acts through a higher desire whenever it in fact determines the will.

§ 60. In Theorem III. he repeats the position that every one of the maxims cited is a practical universal law in form only, as contrasted with matter. Form is also frankly and forcibly defined to be fitness for universal legislation. This fitness is illustrated by examples of the

Practical Principles
Formal, and
not Material.

workings of the four previously supposed rules of conduct in respect to human welfare. If these instances mean anything they justify the interpretation that Kant's formula of universal legislation is always to will such a purpose or voluntary desire as would produce acts which promote the highest well-being of man. (*Cf.* § 40.)

§ 61. Two problems are then proposed. The first is, to find the nature of the will that can ^{Two Problems} be determined by such a law, and the ^{Proposed.} answer is only such a will as is free from natural causality, *i.e.*, the will as such; in simple English, the will as a purpose or voluntary desire when contrasted with the manifestation or execution of its volition in words or bodily acts. The second problem is, "given such a will, to find a law competent to determine it necessarily," which is solved by the discovery of a supposed unconditioned practical law. To this is appended the remark, which not unfrequently occurs in the discussion, that the possibility of freedom would never have been dreamed of and its reality never accepted as a fact, had not the moral law enforced obligations which implied its possibility and reality. Physical science does not know it, nor does the experience of common life. It is ethical experience only which implies and affirms

it. In Kant's own language, man "judges, therefore, that he can do a certain thing because he is conscious that he ought, and he recognizes that he is free, a fact which but for the moral law he would never have known." This is true with a qualification. We may concede that man would in fact know no freedom except through his moral experiences, but instead of holding with Kant that man knows he is free because he knows he ought, we contend that *he believes that he ought because he knows he is free*. Kant's position is still more explicitly asserted in the remark that follows, to which is added a corollary, which asserts that the moral law extends to all moral beings, with this important exception, that for the Infinite Being an act becomes holiness which in created beings would be obedience, inasmuch as that obedience of which the correlate is obligation, is possible only when there is struggling disinclination. In all finite beings, therefore, in whom virtue always involves a conflict and who always reluctance in opposing desire, its triumphs are progressive but never complete. This is the logical and the accepted outcome of Kant's theory of obligation, and needs no further comment here. (*Cf. § 37.*)

§ 62. Theorem IV. treats of the Autonomy and Heteronomy of the will, with the same results as in

the first treatise. (*Cf.* § 45.) Special stress is laid upon the now familiar principle that the authority of the moral law lies not in its matter, but in its form, and that the latter consists in its fitness to be universal. As previously, so here, the examples find all their interest and force as illustrations of the adaptation of right purposes and conduct to promote the welfare of man. Apart from such tendency or fitness, as implied in every example cited by Kant, that is, as he would insist, apart from the *matter*, and regarded as a merely formal element, the condition of universal fitness can only require logical consistency, and can signify or imply nothing more.

In the remarks which follow, Kant recognizes the fact that happiness may be the object of every human being, and that all men find a rational sympathy in the happiness of others, and both these must be assumed in order to make the law of duty practical or efficient, while he insists that inasmuch as these elements are material and not formal they can neither originate nor enforce the law of duty. That this extreme position is necessary to his view of the authority of the law, as the categorical imperative, is sufficiently clear.

In Remark 2, he seeks to reinforce his previous

arguments by the consideration that while men know what duty is with unquestioning convictions, they find it difficult to decide the questions which relate to happiness, overlooking entirely the point that questions of duty are clear only so far as the purpose or internal volition or state is concerned, while questions of happiness (and, we might add, of duty, so far as they depend on questions of happiness) turn on contingent and doubtful matter, viz.: on changing circumstances. It is sufficient to say that no ethical system, whatever its professions, can usually go a whit farther than the purposes or intentions in laying down axiomatic principles or rules of duty. Directions for the conduct generally admit of qualifications and exceptions.

§ 63. Ill-desert is next noticed, which is the rational prerogative of moral volition when it transgresses the moral law, righteously to suffer evil. This property is treated as original, and, as we should infer by the logic of Kant, it must be directly enforced by the categorical imperative. (*Cf.* § 94 on Bishop Butler.) By what reasoning or through what relation it is proved that the purpose (or rather the man) which is not conformed to the law which is fit to be universal, deserves to suffer evil, is not explained. It is only asserted that

were this not true, the conception of justice would be impossible.

The theory of *a moral sense* is next referred to. This Kant seems to have known imperfectly, as it was held by Hutcheson and Shaftesbury. It is, of course, summarily set aside because it uses feeling where reason alone is appropriate. The theory of perfection which was taught by Wolff before and in Kant's day is also noticed, but it is dismissed as empirical, even when held in the form of man's highest dignity as suitable to the end of human existence, and for the reason that it supposes an empirical knowledge of human nature, and therefore must rest on a material, as contrasted with a formal, principle of legislation.

§ 64. After this analysis, the author proceeds to gather up and in a sense to restate the ^{The contrast} results which it seems to justify in the ^{Stated} contrast which it discovers between the ^{between the} ^{Pure and} ^{the Practical} ^{Reason.} pure and practical reason.

The speculative reason gives us no principles *a priori*, but only time and space as *a priori forms*, necessary to the sense-perceptions. Besides these it gives no knowledge of noumena or things in themselves, but only of objects of possible experience as connected by *a priori categories*. It established, how-

ever, the necessity of thinking certain *noumena*, and thus provided negatively for freedom, *i.e.*, for the belief of something more than sense experience as such, but without any positive knowledge concerning it. It pointed to facts and relations beyond the world of sense, to freedom, not merely in a negative, but also in a positive sense, as supposed and implied in the moral law. This introduced into sensible nature a nature that is super-sensible, or, as we may say, connects an autonomy of pure practical reason with the heteronomy of nature, the one controlling and influencing the other without interfering with the laws of either—the moral also proposing the control of the rational or sensible by its own laws, so as to produce the *summum bonum*.

For the truth of this analysis Kant appeals to experience. The moral imperative, he asserts, obliges everyone to speak the truth, to preserve his own life, etc. These acts are not, however, taught by nature as inductions or lessons of experience, but by sundry higher laws as ideals which can only be actualized in experience. Here also, he says, we notice the difference between the laws of a system to which the will is subject and of a system which is subject to a will. In the one case the objects are the causes of the ideas that determine the will, in the other the

will is the cause of the objects. Hence the two problems; the first, how the pure reason can cognize objects *a priori*, the second, how it can determine objects *a priori*. The first has been determined by the answer—only so far as to show how sense-experience is possible by *a priori* intuitions, and without the knowledge of things in themselves. The last does not explain how experiences of desire are possible, for these have also been provided for—but only how reason can determine the maxims of the will. It does not point to an *a priori* intuition, as in the case of the speculative reason; it relates to the states of the will only, separately from their manifestations in sense-activity, inasmuch as any realization of an act or state by the sensibility would carry us into the field of the speculative reason.

In answering these several questions, the critical philosophy begins with certain practical laws or rules of duty as real. Instead of the receptive forms of intuition (the *a priori* element in sense-perception) it assumes the concept of freedom, inasmuch as practical laws of any kind are only possible on the supposition of freedom. We do not explain how freedom is possible, but finding the law of duty as a fact, we know that it implies freedom as a fact. The one is an essential element, and in that sense a

condition of the other. This finishes the exposition of the fundamental principle of the practical reason.

Its deduction, that is, the justification of its validity, is not so easy as is that of the principles of the speculative reason. These last are confirmed by an appeal to experience. But in morals we cannot refer to actual experience, but only to the ideal, *i.e.*, to what ought to be. To another fact, however, we can refer. The fact of freedom, which even the speculative reason was obliged to assume as possible in the form of the unconditioned, is now enforced as the condition of that law of duty, which is imposed by the practical reason. In this way, what was a negative but necessary speculative conception gains objective reality for ethics, and the reason, from a transcendent position or use, passes to one that is immanent—*i.e.*, which is applicable to the feelings and the actions as phenomena.

In the world of sense every cause is a conditional cause, and yet in every series an unconditioned element is supposable. We saw that while in the sphere of *phenomena* freedom is inconceivable and is excluded from positive knowledge, it may still be possible in the world of *noumena*. But what was thus conceived as simply possible is now recognized and enforced by the practical reason as a condition of the

law of duty, and is therefore accepted as true. A *causa noumenon*, *i.e.*, a free cause, is not directly known, and cannot even be conceived by the speculative reason, and yet it can be believed and assumed as implied in the imperative of the practical reason.

§ 65. The preceding suggests the question again, How can we reconcile the extension, beyond its appropriate limits, of the knowledge thus gained by the practical reason, *i.e.*, from noumena to the objects and phenomena of the sensible world? How can we Apply the Commands of the Practical Reason to the World of Sense?

In reply to this question, as formally stated, the author refers to Hume's celebrated argument, that the law of causation involves no objective necessity, and is the mere product of association, so far as this can be applied to make experience possible. He concedes that so far as phenomena are concerned, this may hold good, while yet it does not extend to noumena or the intelligible world. He contends that the conclusions which we have reached in respect to the reality of freedom, as implied by the necessities of the practical reason, simply establish the fact, and consequently its possibility, but do not provide for the determination of any one of its laws, such laws being possible only in the sphere of phenomena. And yet we can know freedom so far as

it intrudes into and modifies phenomena, although we cannot subject it to laws, for to do so would be to make it cease to be freedom. But we gain this much: if we find no incompatibility between the two spheres, we can accept the one as consistent with the other. We even do more: we hold that both are necessary—the one to make experience possible, *i.e.*, possible to speculative reason in the realm of concrete and sensible phenomena, and the other to make noumena, though unconditioned, to be not only intelligible, but necessary to our reason, *i.e.*, to our practical reason, so far as it imposes on us the law of duty, thereby involving freedom.

§ 66. Chapter II. is entitled. The Concept of an Object of Practical Reason; or, as it might be interrogatively expressed. With what kind of objects does the practical reason concern itself, and what kind of products can it bring to pass by its appropriate activity?

The answer to this question is brief, viz.: The object or effect produced is in no sense physical: it is simply moral, *i.e.*, morally good or evil; or, as Kant would say, simply good or evil. inasmuch as he acknowledges no relation between sentient good and evil, on the one hand, and the moral on the other. In our English terminology we should say it

was simply psychical, a state of the will existing for and provided by the will alone; equally good or bad, whether passing over to any outward act or no.

Kant urges that these two kinds of good must be derived from different sources—the first from the sensibilities, and the second from the commands of the moral reason, as their originator—and that each is independent of the other. If the contrary were true, *i.e.*, if moral good and evil were that which produces pleasure and pain, he urges that experience would be necessary to tell us which is good or evil, because it is only by experience that we can learn the cause of either. The maxim of the schoolmen, *Nihil appetimus nisi sub ratione boni*, is often cited to sustain this view. But Kant contends that this adage is misleading by reason of the ambiguity of the word *bonum*, which may mean either sentient or rational, *i.e.*, moral, good. If both senses are included, then the term is ambiguous; if only the first, then it is false. *Well* and *ill* refer to the pleasant or unpleasant, as determined by the sensibility; but *good* or *evil* pertains to the will as determined by the reason. It is true that man is a rational being, and as such must use his reason to judge between means and ends, and in this sense to judge between sentient good and evil; but he also uses this power in the

higher function of judging of that which is good and evil of itself, *i.e.*, morally right or wrong. In the decision of this question, we observe we are compelled to select between two alternatives. We must either, on the one hand, accord to the reason itself the capacity to originate a rational principle, which it applies as a law, which law directly determines the will, as by its choice or rejection it becomes morally good or evil. But if we take this position, we must adopt an apparent paradox, viz.: that the concept of moral good and evil is not determined before the moral law, but is determined after it and by means of it. The other alternative is for us to accept the necessity of defining good and evil in terms of sensibility, and so, as Kant reasons, make both the products of experience.

Moral distinctions, however, he next proceeds to say, pertain only to the states of the will itself, as distinguished from their effects in any forms of external action. But the external actions being phenomena of sense, moral experience must come under at least one of the categories, *i.e.*, of causality as exemplified in the will or voluntary action. So far as they are manifested in the forms of external action, they must also appear in or take form from all the categories. The relations of these moralized categories

to one another are explained at some length, but as this point seems not to be material to the essential features of Kant's theory, we pass it over.

§ 67. What Kant calls the *Typie* of the pure practical reason presents some important ^{The Typie} and interesting features. The objects of ^{of the Pure} ^{Practical} Reason. The will are either good or evil according as the practical reason determines the choice of them by the will to be either morally right or wrong. In other words, says Kant, the will is pronounced by the practical reason right or wrong according as it chooses this or that object, the objects chosen themselves thereby becoming right or wrong. Inasmuch, however, as these moral states, or free acts, go over into the sphere of the sensible world which obeys physical laws, the question is at once suggested, How such external actions can be morally right or wrong. As a sensible event, such an action can be conceived as explained by the schematism of the imagination, though it is the product of freedom, but it is not easy to see how a material or sensible event can take on or be penetrated by moral quality, obeying as it must the physical conditions of existence. This difficulty of Kant's own suggestion it would seem to be difficult for him to answer, but he attempts it by asserting that "the understanding for the purposes

of judgment can provide not a scheme of the sensibility, but a law" such "as can be exhibited *in concreto* in objects of the senses." "The rule of the judgment according to laws of practical reason is this: Ask yourself whether, if the action you propose were to take place by a law of the system of nature of which you were yourself a part, you could regard it as possible by your own will." He then refers to the four cases of obvious immorality (which he had cited more than once), contending that the acts supposed would be wrong, not simply because of the effects or consequences which would follow were the immoral acts in question accepted as laws of nature, but that such laws would in a sense be types of the moral principles required in their several cases. He reasons, whatever his reasoning may signify, that we must hold the moral law to be the type of a natural law, so as to guard it against that empiricism which judges of conduct by consequences, and yet, on the other hand, we must defend ourselves against the mysticism which holds our judgments aloof from and above all consideration of the tendencies and effects of conduct. Truly a wise precaution on his part, but how the *desiderata* can be provided by his theory it is not so easy to discover.

§ 68. Chapter III., of the motives of pure practical reason, is one of the most instructive The Motives of the Pure Practical Reason. in the treatise, giving, as it does, a series of very lucid statements of the practical

working of Kant's theory and anticipating many of the objections and difficulties which he could not but foresee would be urged against it. The first sentence is at once forcible and comprehensive: "What is essential in the moral worth of actions is that the moral law should directly determine the will." It must do this "directly," with no intervention of feeling, inasmuch as this would make the act not to be done for the sake of the law, and thus eviscerate it of its morality. If we understand by motive the subjective ground of an act whose objective ground is not reason, then the Divine Will cannot be influenced by motives, and if the motive of the human being is the moral law alone, "the objective principle of determination must always and alone be also the subjectively sufficient determining principle." We cannot show how a law can directly determine the will, for that were to explain the mystery of free will. But we need to clear its action from every influence upon the feelings, which can only hinder or divide it.

§ 69. We observe, then, that the moral law acts

on the will not only without the coöperation of the sensibilities, but often, if not always, in *Obligation and Respect for the Law.* resistance to them. When this last happens, it checks the feeling which it overcomes, producing as a consequence indirectly and negatively another feeling, which is painful and is the only feeling, the nature and actuality of which may be understood *a priori*, viz.: the feeling of obligation. All the inclinations as such tend to happiness and are classed as ministering to selfishness or to self-conceit. Selfishness is checked by the reason, which prescribes rational welfare, self-conceit is summarily set aside and rejected. The capacity of reason thus to humble selfish vanity is also known *a priori* and awakens *respect for the law*, a feeling which, he tells us, is not empirical, but is known *a priori*, being a feeling which is directly produced by an intellectual cause. The strong tendency to make a subjective into an objective determining principle is checked and humiliated by the moral law, for which *respect* is at once awakened as superior to any pathological experience or affection. Thus, by means of this negative operation of repression, there is awakened a positive emotion in opposition to self-love. Doubtless, Kant gladly availed himself of the opportunity to interpose at this point the

following remark: "No special kind of feeling need be assumed for this under the name of a practical or moral feeling as antecedent to the moral law and serving as its foundation." This negative effect is pathological. So far as the individual as a sensitive being is concerned, it is also humiliating, and so far as the law is concerned, it is respect, which may be indirectly called moral feeling. The effect produced, however, is not pathological, but *practical*, and the respect for the law is not a motive to morality, but is morality itself subjectively considered as a motive. This respect and all which it involves cannot hold good of the Supreme Being or any being who like Him is incapable of sensibility. As for respect, it need not be said it applies to persons only and not to things, *i.e.*, to persons as exemplifying the moral law. Respect for the law may become an interest in so far as it impels us by desire to live a life governed by itself as an objective motive, and also in the technical sense a maxim, but in these effects it can be applied only to imperfect and sentient beings. And yet the interest awakened is *in some sense* moral, just as the feelings are called moral by courtesy. An action determined by the law against inclination is duty, and duty includes practical obligation, *i.e.*, a determination against reluctant feel-

ing. The feeling of elevation at being animated by such a motive involves self-approbation. In this way Kant very rapidly disposes of some of the most important and characteristic ethical emotions.

Acting According to Duty and from a Sense of Duty. The difference between acting according to duty and from a sense of duty, Kant continues, is obvious from the principles laid down, and is itself most important.

The first. *i.e.*, legality, is possible if the inclinations determine the will; the second, only when the moral law is the objective motive. For a perfect being the moral law is a law of holiness; for a being morally imperfect, it is a law of duty. "It is a very beautiful thing to do good to men from love to them and from sympathetic good will, or to be just from love of order; but this is not the true moral maxim of conduct which is suitable to our condition among rational beings, as *men*, when we pretend with fanciful pride to set ourselves above the thought of duty, like volunteers; and, as if we were independent of the command, to want to do of our own good pleasure what we think we need no command to do. * * * Duty and obligation are the only names that we must give to our relations to the moral law."

§ 71. The moral law commands love to God and

our neighbor, but it commands neither as an affection. "To love God means in this sense to like to do His commandments; to love one's neighbor, to like to practice all duties to him." But this is not a command to have the disposition in question, but to "endeavor after it. * * * That law of all laws," viz.: the law of love, exhibits the moral disposition in its perfection as a moral ideal of holiness, when it shall have outgrown the relation of duty and obligation.

After enlarging upon this theme, Kant adds that these remarks are not so much designed to oppose religious fanaticism as that moral fanaticism which imagines that human virtue ought not to be militant, but to be already perfect in holiness.

"Now, if we search we shall find for all actions that are worthy of praise a law of duty which commands, and does not leave us to choose what may be agreeable to our inclinations. This is the only way of representing things that can give a moral training to the soul, because it alone is capable of solid and accurately defined principles.

"If fanaticism in its most general sense is a deliberate overstepping of the limits of human reason, then moral fanaticism is such an overstepping of the bounds that practical pure reason sets to

mankind, in that it forbids us to place the subjective determining principle of correct actions, that is, their moral motive, in anything but the law itself, or to place the disposition which is thereby brought into the maxims in anything but respect for this law: and hence commands us to take, as the supreme vital principle of all morality in men, the thought of duty, which strikes down all arrogance, as well as vain self-love.

"If this is so, it is not only writers of romance or sentimental educators (although they may be zealous opponents of sentimentalism), but sometimes even philosophers; nay, even the severest of all, the Stoics, that have brought in *moral fanaticism*, instead of a sober but wise moral discipline, although the fanaticism of the latter was more heroic, that of the former, of an insipid, effeminate character; and we may, without hypocrisy, say of the moral teaching of the Gospel, that it first, by the purity of its moral principle, and at the same time by its suitability to the limitations of finite beings, brought all the good conduct of men under the discipline of a duty plainly set before their eyes, which does not permit them to indulge in dreams of imaginary moral perfections; and that it also set the bounds of humility (that is, self-knowledge) to self-conceit as

well as to self-love, both of which are ready to mistake their limits.

“Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name, that dost embrace nothing charming or insinuating, but requirest ^{Apostrophe} submission, and ^{to Duty} yet seekest not to move the will by threatening aught that would arouse natural aversion or terror, but merely holdest forth a law which of itself finds entrance into the mind, and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience), a law before which all inclinations are dumb, even though they secretly counter-work it! What origin is there worthy of thee, and where is to be found the root of thy noble descent, which proudly rejects all kindred with the inclinations: a root to be derived from which is the indispensable condition of the only worth which men can give themselves?

“It can be nothing less than a power which elevates man above himself which can enable a man to appreciate the obligation and elevation of such a life. * * * This power is nothing but *personality*, that is, freedom and independence of the mechanism of nature, yet, regarded as a faculty of a being who is subject to special laws, namely, pure practical laws given by its own reason, so that the person, as belonging to the sensible world, is subject to his

own personality as belonging to the intelligible world."

§ 72. It is worthy of notice that *personality* is here recognized for the first time in Kant's ethical treatises. The pregnant import of this *peculum* of human nature and prime essential of responsibility, seems to have occurred to him late in his researches, especially in its relations to freedom and duty, and to have scarcely unfolded its enormous significance in respect to those ideas and emotions which are distinctively ethical. This late recognition is still more significant, in view of the fact that in all the assumptions and conclusions of the Critique of Pure Reason the Ego is regarded as a very evanescent though potent noumenon, which might possibly be recognized as a "logical" experience capable of rendering a questionable though important service in cases of need. No sooner is it once fairly introduced than it expands itself into an abundant and definite import of means and ends, involving some of the most important social relations and pointing toward the most important ethical experiences. Under the excitement of this new and thrilling discovery, Kant seems to forget all questionable metaphysics and to

Personality
Here Recog-
nized for the
First Time.

break out into other eloquent and elevating passages such as we cannot forbear to cite.

"On this origin are founded many expressions which designate the worth of objects according to moral ideas. The moral law is *holy* (inviolable). Man is indeed unholy enough, but he must regard *humanity* in his own person as holy. In all creation everything over which one has any power can only be used *merely as means*; man alone, and with him every rational creature, is an *end in himself*. By virtue of the autonomy of his freedom he is the subject of the moral law, which is holy. Just for this reason every will, even every person's own individual will, in relation to itself, is restricted to the condition of agreement with the *autonomy* of the rational being; that is to say, that it is not to be subject to any purpose which cannot accord with a law which might arise from the will of the passive subject himself; the latter is, therefore, never to be employed merely as means, but as itself also, concurrently, an end. We justly attribute this condition even to the Divine Will, with regard to the rational beings in the world, which are His creatures, since it rests on their *personality*, by which alone they are ends in themselves.

" This respect-inspiring idea of personality, which

sets before our eyes the sublimity of our nature (in its higher aspect), while at the same time it shows us the want of accord of our conduct with it, and thereby strikes down self-conceit. is even natural to the commonest reason, and easily observed. Has not every even moderately honorable man sometimes found that where by an otherwise inoffensive lie he might either have withdrawn himself from an unpleasant business, or even have procured some advantages for a loved and well-deserving friend, he has avoided it solely lest he should despise himself secretly in his own eyes?"

§ 72. In the Analysis of Pure Practical Reason, the writer raises the inquiry why it must have this and no other systematic form, when compared with the speculative system, which is founded on a similar faculty of knowledge. Both kinds of reason are alike in that both are pure, or *a priori*. They differ in that in the theoretic we begin with the intuitions, *i.e.*, with the sensibility, and, proceeding to concepts, end with principles. The practical reason begins with doing, instead of with knowing, *i.e.*, with a will which is a causality, and therefore assumes practical principles *a priori*, and out of these it constructs its

Reasons Why
the Practical
Reason Admits
a Single
Systematic
Form Only.

concepts, *i.e.*, beginning with principles, it ends with concepts.*

§ 73. In further support of the contrast which Kant observes between the Sciences of Truth and of Duty, he appeals to the universal consciousness of man, to decide whether it does not recognize the moral law as altogether *a priori*, and whether its authority is not characterized by a peculiar kind of sentiment which always follows, but never precedes, the regulation of the practical reason. He is careful to remind us, however, that we do not, for this reason, renounce all claim to happiness on the simple authority of duty, nor do we altogether take no account of happiness. On the other hand, he urges that it is our duty to provide for our happiness for other

* We notice here that the dissentients from Kant would say, that theoretic and practical knowledge are alike in beginning with propositions and ending with concepts, although some of these principles, in both, are *a priori* and others *a posteriori*. They would also contend that the materials of the two differ in that, in the one case, they are facts of sense and facts or phenomena of spirit as controlled by fixed laws, while in the other they are activities of spirit as controlled by the will. These dissimilar phenomena, moreover, indicate laws and purposes which justify scientific indications, on the one hand, of physical or permanent laws in the realms of both matter and spirit, and which also suppose moral laws, on the other, so far as freedom and knowledge make these possible. As against Kant, we contend that the difference between the operations of pure and practical reason lies in the difference in material in the two cases, and not, as Kant contends, in a difference in the method or logic appropriate to each.

reasons than those of conscience, but it is never our duty to be happy as such, or to obey any law of duty in view of its known relation to our well-being.

He also adds: The possibility of this ethical knowledge cannot be demonstrated *a priori*. All that we can do is to show that it cannot be shown to be inconsistent with empirical knowledge. He emphasizes the fact that there are those who explain freedom on empirical principles, and treat freedom as a psychological fact, attested by an inspection of the soul and its phenomena, and not as a transcendental predicate of an agent operating in the world of sense; but he objects that they thereby deprive the soul of all knowledge of a supersensible, *i.e.*, of a noumenal world.

From all these difficulties Kant would deliver us, as we have seen, by the, to him, familiar distinction between things in themselves and phenomena in time, although he contends at the same time that that which is transcendently free can also produce sensible effects in the world of sense, under the relations of time, and after laws of physical causation.

§ 74. Others, he urges, would relieve us from this difficulty by distinguishing the causes that are concerned, calling the one mechanical and the other

spiritual or psychical. Mechanism, he replies, does not designate the nature of the material which operates, but the laws of its working. An automaton is an automaton, whether it is material or spiritual in its structure. Moreover, we should remember that, so far as consciousness decides, it attests that so far as the relations of time and the senses are concerned, we are under the law of necessity; but so far as we are conscious of ourselves as *noumena*, or *things in themselves*, we are certain that we are free. He adds, what a man is in himself is his character—that permanent something to which he imputes his several acts—and with this distinction all the phenomena of common life are in complete harmony.

"It may, therefore, be admitted that if it were possible to have so profound an insight into a man's mental character, as shown by internal as well as external actions, as to know all its motives, even the smallest, and likewise all the external occasions that can influence them, we could calculate a man's conduct for the future with as complete certainty as a lunar or solar eclipse; and nevertheless, we may maintain that the man is free. In fact, if we were capable of a further glance, namely, an intellectual intuition of the same subject (which, indeed, is not

granted to us, and instead of it we have only the rational concept) then we should perceive that this whole chain of appearances in regard to all that concerns the moral law depends on the spontaneity of the subject as a thing in itself, of the determination of which no physical explanation can be given. In default of this intuition, the moral law assures us of this distinction between the relation of our actions, as appearances to our sensitive nature, and the relation of this sensitive nature to the supersensible substratum in us. In this view, which is natural to our reason, though inexplicable, we can also justify some judgments which we passed with all conscientiousness, and which yet, at first sight, seem quite opposed to all equity. There are cases in which men, even with the same education which has been profitable to others, yet show such early depravity, and so continue to progress in it to years of manhood, that they are thought to be born villains, and their character altogether incapable of improvement; and nevertheless they are judged for what they do or leave undone, they are reproached for their faults as guilty, nay, they themselves (the children) regard these reproaches as well founded, exactly as if, in spite of the hopeless natural quality of mind ascribed to them, they remained just as responsible

as any other man. This could not happen if we did not suppose that whatever springs from a man's choice (as every action intentionally performed undoubtedly does) has as its foundation a free causality, which from early youth expresses its character in its manifestations, *i.e.*, outward actions. These, on account of the uniformity of conduct, exhibit a natural connection, which, however, does not make the vicious quality of the will necessary; but, on the contrary, is the consequence of the evil principles, voluntarily adopted and unchangeable, which only make it so much the more culpable and deserving of punishment."

Here, however, another difficulty is interposed, unless it is escaped by the theory of the author that time and space are not realities, but are only forms of sense. If they were realities and man were created with a sense-organization conformed to them as such, then all his acts in time and space would be the necessary effects of his nature as adapted to this environment, even if we should accord to him as a noumenon moral freedom, inasmuch as in such a case his acts would be the necessary products of his circumstances.

§ 75. From this difficulty we can deliver ourselves by supposing that man is created as a noume-

non, and with no real relations to time and space,
Relations of
Man the
Noumenon
to Time and
Space. if indeed neither time nor space has any reality, both being simply forms of sense. Hence his responsibility can not extend to his acts as related to either.

This solution of a serious difficulty, Kant urges, not only relieves us from the direct presence of a perplexing dilemma, but indirectly confirms our faith in the original assumption, which was made in the Critique of Speculative Reason, that space and time are only forms of sense, but are not realities or things in themselves. This relief is confirmed by a direct appeal to the practical reason and the testimony which it gives, that man is only responsible for what he is in himself, by his free and spiritual activity, and so far is independent of his Creator.

Another incidental argument in support of the view that freedom is not inconsistent with the doctrine of the categories is this: That while the mathematical categories are simply analytic, asserting nothing in the predicate which is not contained in the subject, the dynamical are synthetic and in their very nature introduce new matter. This allows us to suppose the unconditioned to come in and interact with or to act upon the conditioned, and produce new effects,

and to connect together two kinds of causality, the fixed and the free. This indirect confirmation of his doctrine of the categories is welcomed by Kant with the following interesting comment:

"Let me be permitted on this occasion to make one more remark, namely, that every step that we make with pure reason, even in the practical sphere where no attention is paid to subtle speculation, nevertheless accords with all the material points of the Critique of the Theoretical Reason as closely and directly as if each step had been thought out with deliberate purpose to establish this confirmation. Such a thorough agreement, wholly unsought for, and quite obvious (as anyone can convince himself, if he will only carry moral inquiries up to their principles), between the most important propositions of practical reason and the often seemingly too subtle and needless remarks found in the Critique of the Speculative Reason occasions surprise and astonishment, and confirms the maxim already recognized and praised by others: namely, that in every scientific inquiry we should pursue our way steadily with all possible exactness and frankness without caring for any objections that may be raised from outside its sphere, but as far as we can, should carry out our inquiry truthfully and completely by itself. Fres-

quent observation has convinced me that when such researches are concluded, that which in one part of them appeared to me very questionable, considered in relation to other extraneous doctrines, when I left this doubtfulness out of sight for a time, and only attended to the business in hand until it was completed, at last was unexpectedly found to agree perfectly with what had been discovered separately without the least regard to those doctrines, and without any partiality or prejudice for them. Authors would save themselves many errors and much labor lost (because spent on a delusion) if they could only resolve to go to work with more frankness."

§ 76. From the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason, Kant proceeds to its *Dialectic*, that is, to the explanation and removal of the illusions which necessarily pertain to our inquiries. These illusions, according to Kant, are incidental to their analyses, as to those of the speculative reason, and for a similar reason, viz.: that neither the practical nor the speculative can penetrate to the knowledge of things in themselves, and yet both are prone to mistake the knowledge of the sum of the conditions of phenomena for the properly unconditioned. The only relief we can find is by the discovery of the grounds of each, and the fact that we

The Dialectic of the Practical Reason.

mistake the one for the other. Under this misleading tendency in ethics men have substituted the gratification of the inclinations, under the title of the *summum bonum*, for that which is good in itself as given by the practical reason. We have already seen that the moral law is the sole determining principle of the will, as law, not as good, simply from its form or fitness to serve as a universal principle. The *summum bonum* may be, in fact, involved in it, but the moral law is to be obeyed as law, and not to be sought as good. Otherwise we introduce heteronomy into the will. So if the *summum bonum* included the moral law as conditional to itself, then the good, and not the law, would give it force over the will. How then shall we rightly conceive and define the two in their mutual relations? This is attempted in Chapter II, in which Kant first remarks that *summum* may mean *supreme*, *i.e.*, ultimate, or *complete*, *i.e.*, entire. The first is dependent on no other; the second is wanting in nothing. Virtue has been already shown to be worthy of happiness, and in this sense it is not happiness, nor does it involve happiness, but only desert of the same, virtue being the condition of happiness, but still happiness as dependent on virtue. The one is not identical with the other through an analytical con-

nection, neither as the Epicureans nor as the Stoics connected the two, but virtue must first exist by the free activity of the will, in order that happiness should either be discerned or enjoyed, and this by an *a priori* necessity. This involves an antinomy of the practical reason, viz.: (1) either the desire of happiness must be the motive to the maxims of virtue, or (2) the maxims of virtue must be the causes of happiness. The first is impossible, Kant would contend, as has been abundantly shown ; the second also, because happiness in this world depends on other knowledge than ethical, and the observance of other laws. The antinomy seems at first insoluble. It is solved, however, by a resort to the always convenient distinction between things in themselves and phenomena. The first proposition given above, that the desire of happiness produces virtue, is absolutely false ; the second is not false absolutely, but only so far as the moral holds relations to the sensible world, that is conditionally; it may, therefore, be true, so far as this sensible world is viewed as controlled by a superior will.

§ 77. But here, again, the author warns his read-

ers against confounding the influences
of Moral Satisfaction which proceed from the anticipated
Not Moral pleasure that follows virtue with the

legitimate influence which the moral law exerts directly on the will.

"Now the consciousness of a determination of the faculty of desire is always the source of a satisfaction in the resulting action; but this pleasure, this satisfaction in oneself, is not the determining principle of the action: on the contrary, the determination of the will directly by reason is the source of the feeling of pleasure, and this remains a pure practical, but not a sensible, determination of the faculty of desire. Now, as this determination has exactly the same effect within, in impelling to activity, that a feeling of the pleasure to be expected from the desired action would have had, we easily look on what we ourselves do as something which we merely passively feel, and take the moral spring for a sensible impulse, just as it happens in the so-called illusion of the senses (in this case in the inner sense).

"Respect, not pleasure or enjoyment of happiness, is something for which it is not possible that reason should have any *antecedent* feeling as its foundation (for this would always be sensible and pathological); and consciousness of immediate obligation of the will by the law is by no means analogous to the feeling of pleasure, although in relation to the

faculty of desire it produces the same effect, but from different sources. It is only by this mode of conception, however, that we can attain what we are seeking, namely, that actions be done not merely in accordance with duty (as a result of pleasant feelings), but from duty, which must be the true end of all moral cultivation."

§ 78. Will it be believed that immediately on writing these words our critical philosopher recovers his thoughts and asks: "Have we not, however, a word which does not express enjoyment, as happiness does, but indicates *a satisfaction in one's existence*, an analogue of *the happiness* which must necessarily accompany *the consciousness of virtue*? Yes! this word is *self-contentment*, which in its proper signification always designates only a negative satisfaction in one's existence, in which one is conscious of needing nothing. Freedom, and the consciousness of it, as a faculty of following the moral law with unyielding resolution, is independent of inclinations, at least as motives determining (though not affecting) our desire; and so far as I am conscious of this freedom in following my moral maxims, it is the only source of an unaltered contentment which is necessarily connected with it, and rests on no special

Self-content-
ment Con-
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be Ethically
Legitimate.

feeling. This may be called intellectual contentment. The sensible contentment (improperly so called) which rests on the satisfaction of the inclinations, however delicate they may be imagined to be, can never be adequate to the conception of it. For the inclinations change: they grow with the indulgence shown them, and always leave behind a still greater void than we had thought to fill. Hence they are always burdensome to a rational being, and although he cannot lay them aside, they wrest from him the wish to be rid of them. Even an inclination to what is right (*e.g.*, to beneficence), though it may much facilitate the efficacy of the moral maxims, cannot produce any. For in these all must be directed to the conception of the law as a determined principle, if the action is to contain morality, and not merely legality.

"Freedom itself becomes in this way (namely, indirectly) capable of an enjoyment which cannot be called happiness, because it does not depend on the positive concurrence of a feeling, nor is it, strictly speaking, *bliss*, since it does not include complete independence on inclinations and wants; but it resembles bliss in so far as the determination of one's will, at least, can hold itself free from their influence; and thus, at least in its origin, this enjoyment

is analogous to the self-sufficiency which we can ascribe only to the Supreme Being."

§ 79. Chapter III. opens a topic of marvellous interest, viz.: the primacy of pure practical reason in its union with the speculative reason. The brief remarks which the author offers are admirable for their practical good sense, however unsatisfactory some of them may seem for the want of scientific exactness. We accept with thanks what he says in the following, when it is popularly or practically interpreted: "But if pure reason of itself can be practical, and is actually so, as the consciousness of the moral law proves, then still it is only one and the same reason which, whether in a theoretical or a practical point of view, judges according to *a priori* principles; and then it is clear that although it is in the first point of view incompetent to establish certain propositions positively, which, however, do not contradict it, then as soon as these propositions are inseparably attached to the practical interest of pure reason, it must accept them, though it be as something offered to it from a foreign source, something that has not grown on its own ground, but yet is sufficiently authenticated; and it must try to compare and connect them with everything that it has in its power as speculative

The Primacy of the Practical Reason above the Speculative Reason.

reason. It must remember, however, that these are not additions to its insight, but yet are extensions of its employment in another, namely a practical aspect; and this is not in the least opposed to its interest, which consists in the restriction of wild speculation.

“Thus, when pure speculative and pure practical reason are combined in one cognition, the latter has the primacy, provided, namely, that this combination is not contingent and arbitrary, but founded *a priori* on reason itself, and therefore necessary.”

§ 80. The practical wisdom and the catholic liberality of these views are obvious to any candid mind. The only question which they might suggest would be in what respects the practical reason differs from the speculative, and wherein they spring from a common root of *a priori* truths. If they are so nearly akin as to be in substance the same, how can it be that the categorical principles of the two are held by Kant to differ so widely, and by what authority does the practical reason supplement the speculative in so many important particulars? As Kant appeals to the authority of the practical reason as supreme in the chapters which follow, we are tempted to ask whether the speculative does not in

How Far
Have the Two
a Common
Root?

fact play as important a rôle as the practical in support of the vital truths which he proceeds, in the next chapter, to present in order as "Postulates of the Pure Practical Reason."

§ 81. IV. The first of these is the immortality of the soul. Kant's argument that this ^{Argument for} ^{Immortality.} is demanded by the "practical reason" is as follows. A will controlled by the moral law will of necessity require the realization of the *summum bonum*. But in such a will there must be the complete accordance of the feelings (*dispositions, Gesinnungen*) with the moral law. This must be practicable, or it would not be required. But such a perfection is holiness, of which no rational being in the conditions of sense-existence is capable. It can be found only in his progress *ad infinitum* toward this ideal. But this progress involves actual immortality, or an endless duration of the existence and personality of the rational being who is the subject of the law of duty; the *summum bonum* required by the moral law being attainable only on condition of the soul's actual experience of an endlessly continued, *i.e.* an immortal existence, or rather a long-continued existence which has no *raison d'être* after moral perfection has been attained and the service of duty has been exchanged for the raptures of holy love.

This argument needs only a brief comment. It assumes that whatever is demanded by the moral law will in every case be realized, *i.e.*, that all moral ideals must sooner or later be fulfilled in fact or tendency. The assumption is set aside by the plain fact of experience that these ideals in many cases are not made good. The underlying principle cannot be accepted as a postulate which admits of no exception, and if the postulate fails, the conclusion derived from it must fail also.

What gives plausibility to the argument is the appeal to purpose or final cause, which may be supposed to underlie this verbal argument of Kant. Thus interpreted, the argument would be as follows: Perfect holiness, in some moral beings, at least, must be the final issue of the system of moral influences by which men are disciplined. Such holiness, it may be conceded, requires for its consummation a long-continued, *i.e.*, a practically endless existence. Therefore, in this sense, and by this logic, the conscience, or moral reason, demands and insures an immortal existence to some moral beings, and perhaps to all.

§ 82. Admitting that this argument, stated in this form, is valid, it should be observed that it rests solely on the relation of purpose or final cause,

which is a category of the pure reason, if of either ;
This Argu- and derives all its logical or rational force
ment Assumes from a relation which Kant's practical
Design as Design as
Objectively reason does not recognize, viz.: the re-
True. lation of adaptation. The subject-matter
of the argument is ethical, indeed, but the logic
is altogether speculative. The necessity of ap-
pealing to the practical reason for a logic which the
speculative reason fails to present, is so far from
being made good that, on the other hand, the val-
idity of speculative logic with its rational categories
is made more conspicuous by the very argument
which is introduced in its place from the *soi-disant*
practical reason alone. Moreover, the grand con-
summation which both these ponderous Critiques
were constructed to achieve, viz.: that the categories
of the speculative reason are failures except so far as
they are enforced by the practical reason, is brought
to nothing by the very argument for immortality,
with which this latter would triumphantly reinforce
our philosophy and our faith.

§ 83. Kant's argument for the existence of God
from the practical reason is closely allied
Argument for God's Existence. to his argument for man's immortality.
The moral reason commands man to real-
ize the first element of the *summum bonum*, *i.e.*,

moral perfection, or, as Kant terms it, holiness, in the sense of a cheerful and loving acquiescence in the law of duty. But such holiness is only possible on the supposition of the continued, *i.e.*, the immortal, existence of the human soul. It follows that if man is a moral, he must be an immortal being. But the same moral law, in its demand of the realization of the *summum bonum* as a duty, also requires that the moral being, so far as he is sentient, should be made happy, not on the ground that the conception of holiness includes in its contents any relation whatever to sentient enjoyment, but on the ground that moral goodness in its very essence or nature involves desert of sentient good, *i.e.*, worthiness to be happy. This, according to Kant, is the second or completing half of the conception which is enforced by its demand.

This being assumed, he proceeds to reason thus: The moral law, in demanding this of the moral will — this desert of happiness — assumes the possibility that this desideratum should be realized. But this implies that a being exists who is both able and disposed to reward the good; *i.e.*, it implies the existence of God. "It was seen to be a duty for us to promote the *summum bonum*, consequently it is not merely allowable, but it is a necessity connected

with duty as a requisite that we should presuppose the possibility of this *summum bonum*, and as this is possible only on condition of the existence of God, it inseparably connects the supposition of this with duty, that is, it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God." That we should presuppose this possibility, Kant reasons, follows from the obligation to promote the *summum bonum* in its double form of moral and natural good, but the realization of this possibility seems also to require that we suppose a supreme intelligence. As a principle of explanation for the speculative reason, this may be called a hypothesis, but when viewed in the light of the moral significance of the imperative of the moral law, it may be called faith.

§ 84. In this argument, if it can be called an argument. Kant overlooks the obvious distinction between the proposition that the universe is controlled and, so to speak, administered by an intelligent being for rational ends, and the truth that he administers it for moral ends, and is, therefore, a moral being, as is required by our faith in duty, and our rational inferences from this faith. We cannot forget that, in the Critique of the Pure Reason he had criticised the principal speculative arguments for the existence

of God, and had found in them all, the common weakness that, in his view, pertains to all the speculative relations of the unconditioned, whether viewed in idea or in fact. In the Critique of the Practical Reason he had proposed to supply this defect, and to furnish the materials and to explain the processes which through our moral faith should establish God to our speculative reason, and thus supplement all the defects and *lacuna* which the latter was so quick to discover, but so impotent to supplement or to overcome. How does he succeed in these promises, long deferred and stoutly maintained? We are compelled to say that the import of the promise seems almost to have been forgotten, in the seeming effort to fulfil it. All that Kant even attempts to prove is, that the moral law, in imposing or asserting the truth that moral goodness deserves to be rewarded, requires for this end a moral being who is able and willing to effect its behests. As if there were no difference between what ought to be and what actually is, and as though the moral law, as ideal and mandatory, were not conspicuous in enforcing this distinction. Meanwhile, the point is certainly overlooked, that the apparent force of the argument is derived from the assumption that there is a rational and almighty Intelligence behind the

sensible universe, in respect to whom, provided we are assured that He exists, it may be argued that He is moral, and will enforce the behests of the moral law. But we have been waiting all this while under the questioning, not to say the sceptical, suggestions of the first Critique, to know whether we may trust our speculative reason confidently enough to know whether God actually exists. Meanwhile, we have been told that the practical reason would remove and settle all these questionings. It is somewhat tantalizing, after all this delay, to be informed that all that it can do for us is to make it clear that if there is a God, "He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"; but that all we can know of G. d. in fact, is included in certain moral necessities of man, and whatsoever these may imply.

§ 85. Our philosopher is not content with leaving this topic here. He seems to be fully aware that he has not entirely cleared it up to the satisfaction of his readers, and perhaps not completely to his own. After a few remarks in respect to the teachings of the ancient religions, and particularly the Christian, he seeks to make his views more clear in respect to the postulates of pure practical reason in general, viz.: immortality, freedom, and God. The first, as has

New
Argument
Attempted.

already been explained, is derived from the duty enjoined completely to fulfil the moral law, or to attain that holiness which can only be achieved by a continued and practically endless future existence. The second, freedom, is implied in that practical independence of all motives of sense which is involved in obeying a rational law. The third, the existence of God, is implied in the realization of the *summum bonum* by the sole agency which is conceivable as adequate to its achievement—that of the Supreme. These ethical postulates of the practical reason lead to inferences which the speculative reason necessarily proposes to itself, but cannot solve. Should it attempt to do either, it must fall into paralogisms, and therefore it must content itself with knowing of each that there is a something ethically related to the moral nature, or law and destiny of man, of which it knows that its moral needs require so much and nothing more.

"Is our knowledge, however, actually extended in this way by pure practical reason, and is that *immanent* in practical reason, which for the speculative was only *transcendent*? Certainly, but only *in a practical point of view*. For we do not thereby take knowledge of the nature of our souls, nor of the intelligible world, nor of the Supreme Being, with

respect to what they are in themselves; but we have merely combined the conceptions of them in the *practical* concept of the *summum bonum* as the object of our will, and this altogether *a priori*, but only by means of the moral law, and merely in reference to it, in respect of the object which it commands. But how freedom is possible, and how we are to conceive this kind of causality theoretically and positively, is not thereby discovered; but only that such a causality is postulated by the moral law and in its behoof. It is the same with the remaining ideas, the possibility of which no human intelligence will ever fathom, but the truth of which, on the other hand, no sophistry will ever wrest from the conviction even of the commonest man."

§ 86. This attempt at explanation suggests to the critic himself the following pertinent inquiry (VII): "How is it possible to conceive an extension of pure reason in a practical point of view, unless its speculative knowledge is also at the same time enlarged?" This question he answers as follows: The warrant for practically extending a pure cognition must be furnished by some purpose or end enforced on the will by the categorical imperative. "Thus, by the practical law, which commands the existence

Can the Practical be Independent of the Speculative Reason?

of the highest good possible in a world, the possibility of those objects of pure speculative reason is postulated and the objective reality which the latter could not assure them." That is, the theoretical knowledge is enlarged, but only so far as the practical necessities require. But this extension gives no warrant for making any theoretical use of the same. Nothing is gained except that these concepts exist and have their possible objects. These three ideas are in themselves not cognitions of fact, but they are concepts in which there is nothing impossible. Being necessary conditions of objects that are morally imperative, they become real without our knowing how they are intellectually or rationally related to our conception of them. In a word, we know that they are, but do not know what they are in any real sense so that we can define them completely or derive from them any other than certain limited practical inferences. To the speculative reason they are transcendent and regulative only. When the categories are to be applied to these ideas, it is not possible to find any existing objects for them by *intuition*, but only for the concepts which are involved in the *summum bonum* which the practical reason requires. It will be observed that the limitations enforced upon the speculative reason are not limita-

tions in the number of the relations or properties affirmed, but in the kind of those which can possibly be asserted of them. Were the first true, the defect of ethical concepts would be a defect of degree only; whereas the defect is owing to the nature of the subject-matter, which refuses to be classed with the relations or methods that belong to any objects which are subjected to the forms or intuitions of space or time.

§ 87. The requirement or ground of belief in each of these cases is peculiar (VIII).
Difference between a Hypothesis and a Postulate. “A want or requirement of pure reason in its speculative use leads only to a hypothesis, that of pure practical reason to a *postulate*.” In the one case I suppose or find a set of facts which I explain to my reason. In the other, I find a duty, the possibility of which requires certain conditions, as God, freedom, and immortality. The duty is independent of these conditions, but the disposition to perform it presupposes that its perfect realization is possible, as a fact, with all that this realization implies.

It would seem at first that this doctrine implies that a rational faith is in so far a matter of command. Let it be observed, then, that the first element, duty as duty, is the subject of a command, but

only while the second, the possibility of the realization of the happiness which duty merits, is a question in respect to which a doubt is possible. The mind which is rightly disposed will accept but one conclusion. This faith "may at times waver in the well disposed, but can never be reduced to unbelief."

§ 88. If this is the conclusion which Kant reaches, it would seem to lower our faith in these

three supreme conditions of the *summum bonum* to a simple hypothesis which is

Kant's Argument Reduced to — What?

highly probable because it is enforced by our noblest aspirations. As against this objection, Kant carefully defines the limitations of our cognitive faculties, both speculative and practical, which are taught in his speculative and practical treatises. This exposition is given in the concluding Chapter IX. under the title, "Of the Wise Adaptation of Man's Cognitive Faculties to his Practical Destination," and consists of the following suggestions: Were our capacities for speculative and practical knowledge less limited than they are, could we completely understand the nature of things by our speculative and practical reason, including God and all his relations to nature and to man; we should live and act in the constant and living presence of these astounding and comprehended truths. It may be supposed that in

such a case we should necessarily and constantly conform our characters and conduct to these overwhelming realities. But such a conformity would be mechanical, necessary, perhaps interested and selfish, and at the best it would fail of that noble and disinterested virtue which the present limitations of our knowledge render possible and even necessary. We conclude, then, that for the purposes of moral discipline and culture these limitations are wisely adapted to man's true well-being, and in this wise adaptation we find an additional evidence that our theory is true.

§ 89. The second and concluding part of this *Critique* is entitled "The Methodology of Pure Practical Reason," and is a brief treatise on the best practical methods by which the practical reason may be instructed and trained. In it the author reiterates in a practical form the doctrines of his treatise, that morality must be disinterested and self-centred, authoritative and unselfish, and that whether it can be successfully imparted will depend largely on the method by which it is inculcated and exemplified by teachers and writers, by parents and guardians. In this discussion he presses very hard upon sentimental and selfish moralists because, in his opinion, they use flat-

Methodology
of the Practical Reason.

terry and employ mercenary appliances, and fail to set forth duty in its majestic and self-asserting authority, and to invest it with its simple dignity and grace.

The discussion ends with the following celebrated and oft-quoted meditation:

"Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the one ^{The Starry} and the more steadily we reflect on ^{Heavens} and the them: the starry heavens above and the ^{Moral Law,} moral law within.* I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness, or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon. I see them before me, and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The former begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds

* It is possible that Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty* may have been inspired by these thoughts, particularly the following:

"Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face.
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh and strong."

Or, which is still more probable, both may have been unconsciously suggested by Psalm xix. vss. 1, 7, 8.

upon worlds and systems of systems, and, moreover, into limitless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuance. The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent, but in a universal and necessary connection, as I am also thereby with all those visible worlds. The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which, after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an *intelligence* by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent on animality, and even on the whole sensible world, at least so far as may be inferred from the destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite.

" But though admiration and respect may excite to inquiry, they cannot supply the want of it. What, then, is to be done in order to enter on this in a

useful manner, and one adapted to the loftiness of the subject? Examples may serve in this as a warning, and also for imitation. The contemplation of the world began from the noblest spectacle that the human senses present to us, and that our understanding can bear to follow in their vast reach, and it ended in — astrology. Morality began with the noblest attribute of human nature, the development and cultivation of which give a prospect of infinite utility, and ended in — fanaticism or superstition."

§ 90. The answer which we should give to this pregnant inquiry of Kant is the exact opposite of the conclusion which he derives from the critique to which he has subjected the practical reason. We should say that ethical phenomena and laws are as truly the subjects of scientific investigation as those which are physical. Misdirected agencies and imaginative theories in both lead to mischief of every species. It is only as we understand the nature of the subject-matter of both that we can adopt a true method for either. With this interpretation we should heartily adopt his parting words: "In one word, science (critically undertaken and methodically directed) is the narrow gate that leads to the true doctrine of practical wisdom, if we understand by this not merely

Practical
Needs are
Supreme and
Isolated.

what one ought to do, but what ought to serve teachers as a guide to construct well and clearly the road to wisdom which everyone should travel, and to secure others from going astray. Philosophy must always continue to be the guardian of this science, and although the public does not take any interest in its subtle investigations, it must in the resulting doctrines which such an examination first puts in a clear light."

Comments on the Conclusion.

§ 91. This rhapsodical conclusion of this elaborate Critique reminds the reader of the title of the last chapter of Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas*, viz.: "The Conclusion in Which Nothing is Concluded." The imaginative meditation of the eloquent writer upon the starry heavens and the law of duty is both impressive and elevating; but the vague replies to our most serious questionings with which it puts us off, and its indefinite resolution of our philosophic doubts, only serve to aggravate the keenness of our disappointment. The first of these treatises which we have reviewed, the *Grundlegung*, had professed only to prepare our way for more exact analyses and more scientific inquiries. It left us with the equivocal consolation of being at least made fully acquainted with the reasons why the ultimate concepts and axioms of

ethical science must in some sense be ultimate and incomprehensible. But notwithstanding this discouraging intimation, we were encouraged to hope that the Critique of the Practical Reason might not only clear up the incomprehensibilities into which the earlier ethical treatise had plunged us, but that it might redeem the hope or promise which had cheered us on our thorny path, viz.: that the analysis of the practical reason, in dissipating its own difficulties, would restore our confidence in the decisions of the speculative reason. But, alas! at the end of our toil we are informed that the axioms of ethical faith are rooted only in our own ineradicable conviction of their practical importance, and that they scarcely seem capable of either scientific formulation or philosophic adjustment; while the practical reason itself is so far from going farther than this, or from rendering its proffered and promised aid to the speculative, that it can best satisfy its own needs and that of its elder sister by looking up to the heavens in an attitude of wondering worship, and down into the heart of man in reverent faith. We confess ourselves surprised at this conclusion, after the long trial to our patience from the scholastic terminology, the acute criticism, and the sharp insight with which these treatises superabound, all of

which had prepared us to hope that all these preparations would have given us something more than this effusion of the imagination, truthful and eloquent though it be.

The conclusion also suggests a thought which, in our opinion, is of no inconsiderable importance as an explanation of the charm with which Kant's original researches continue to be invested, and of their power to excite and hold the minds of men long after the original questions, as Kant proposed them, had taken new forms, and been expressed in new terminology. Kant's extraordinary power to attract and hold his readers seems to lie in that rare combination of metaphysical acuteness with imaginative verve and inspiration, by which he is distinguished. Not unfrequently he seems to lose himself and to bewilder his readers in the entangled maze of his over-refined analyses and his barbarous terminology. On other occasions he sinks in helpless discouragement under the weight of those transcendental ideas which his philosophy is forced to recognize, but is incapable of defining and defending by his own chosen terminology. In these extremities, however urgent, his imagination never fails to find language in which to give expression to those faiths which he has the magnanimity to confess are "the light of all our see-

ing," while his glowing rhetoric lights up the thorniest maze of abstract reasoning with a radiance which extorts the wonder of the admiring reader, even when the argument, thus illuminated, fails to commend itself to his cooler judgment. For this reason, among many others, it seems to us that the watchword, "*Back to Kant*," will long be repeated and responded to even by those students of philosophy who find no occasion to accept Kant as their master.

CHAPTER IV.

A CRITICAL SUMMARY OF KANT'S ETHICAL THEORY.

§ 92. We begin with Kant's doctrine of *the Practical reason*. The introduction of this appellation by Kant excited wonder and called forth criticism from many quarters. How can there be two sorts of reason, was asked by his critics, and with what propriety can reason be designated as practical at all? In answer to these queries, Kant denied that he held to two kinds of reason, but sought to justify the double application of the term by explaining that it was occasioned by the difference in the subject-matter* with which reason has to do, and the consequent difference in the relations or attributes which it is supposed to discern. While the speculative reason is concerned with the attributes of fact or truth, the

* It is pertinent here to ask, however, whether, according to Kant's own analysis, obligation, or the nucleus of the same, must not first be experienced or felt, before it is discerned, *i.e.*, whether some form of sensibility and its relations, rather than the intellect, does not furnish the objective material of moral distinctions, contrarily to his entire theory.

practical is limited to attributes of action and of duty; the one affirming what is true and should be assented to, the other what should be done or effected; the first implying *knowledge*, and the second *obligation*. It may be questioned, however, whether the language which he used, and the illustrations and arguments which he employed were not all fitted to leave the impression that the difference was in no wise limited to the objective matter of intellectual assent; but was also extended to the subjective character of the processes by which ethical truth is responded to or obeyed. At all events, it is certain that Kant intended that, as in the phenomena of speculative reason the intellect alone is concerned only with relations of fact or truth, so the practical reason implies only relations to the will, and enforces relations of duty. It would follow that the will, being the necessary correlate of the intellect, acting as the practical reason, both logically and actually, might also occasionally be used by Kant interchangeably with it—the practical reason discerning and enforcing obligation for and upon the will, and the will subjectively responding to this relation in its freedom under a sense of mere authority.

§ 93. It is also a fundamental truth with Kant, and oft repeated by him, that the authority of its

commands is not derived from the goodness of that Whence Its Authority. which is commanded; but that an act is morally good because it is commanded by the reason. No action is commanded because it is good, or as being good; but it is good because and in so far as it is enforced by the practical reason, it being first simply commanded and accepted as morally right, and thereby becoming morally good. It is not enforced as morally right, because it is desirable, or excellent, or good; but is good because it is enforced as right by the reason. The sense of obligation, moreover, it should be noticed, in all cases supposes a reluctant, even though it be an obedient will. A being who responds to the judgments of the practical reason without a conflict,— showing that his emotional and active nature is already in harmony with the moral law,—has no sense of obligation, however complete his holiness, and the decisions or judgments of the practical reason do not assume for him the power or force of law. Such a man is a holy, but not a virtuous man.

§ 94. The practical reason of Kant seems at first How Related to Butler's Principle of Reflection. thought to be identical with the "superior principle of reflection or conscience" of Bishop Butler, whose functions are thus defined; it "distinguishes between the internal

principles of his heart"; it "passes judgment upon himself" and other men; it "pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, and good," etc., "without being advised with"; it "unquestionably exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer." Butler recognizes in these features "a prerogative or natural supremacy of this moral faculty," or, as he once calls it, "the moral reason," and contends that "we may have a clear conception of the superior nature of our inward principles to one another," and gathers the result of his analysis into the pregnant conclusion that "this is a constituent part of the idea—that is, of the faculty itself—and to preside and govern from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength as it has right, had it power as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world." These and other assertions of Butler seem to be almost literal translations of the language of Kant in respect to the practical reason and the categorical imperative. It is worthy of notice, however, that Butler finds in these doctrines only illustrations and confirmations of the truth held by the best Greek schools, that the nature or constitution of man is the norm or standard by which moral distinctions are tested and enforced, and that the rule "to follow

nature," or "to live according to nature," was in his view broad enough to provide for every special ethical direction. While Butler appears to agree with Kant in holding the *categorical imperative*, he differs from him in finding the enforcement of its authority in the constitution of man as its powers and ends are interpreted by himself. That is to say, as against Kant, he founded the authority of conscience on the *matter* of its commands, as contrasted with their mere *form*. This difference, expressed in other language, would be as follows: [While Kant begins with a simple dictum of authority, Butler explains and enforces this authority as an interpretation of the ends of reason, as manifested in the constitution of the soul and the universe of God, and enforced by their ultimate authority.] Instead of a categorical imperative, Butler furnishes an imperative that is hypothetical, enforcing its dicta with the implied condition, If you would act according to the nature of things, or the ends for which you exist, you will do or avoid so and so.] It is true, he assumes the nature of man to be so and so. Every occasion of doubt will bring up the question, Is this nature such as you assume it to be? By what methods or tests we are to discover and determine this nature, with its subordinate

or supreme ends, Butler does not explain. Indeed, he attempts no analysis or explanation, or very scantily, of what he means by conformity to nature, being content with a few positive and disconnected utterances, which he does not attempt to reconcile or adjust with one another, either by psychological introspection or metaphysical analysis.

The very elaborate preface to his sermons is instructive and suggestive in respect to all the points to which we have referred, and particularly the general truth that he relies on the analysis of man's nature for the determination of the purposes for which it exists, and the normal uses to which it should be applied. It is particularly worthy of notice that the authority of this "superior principle of reflection" is partially explained by its being other than a "propension" or impulse. It is true that Butler, like Kant, in words attaches to a simple thought-object a lawgiving power over an impulse, and there leaves the analysis of obligation: but he does not, like Kant, exalt a metaphor into a theory, and hypostasize an abstraction into a fancied personality, called the categorical imperative. In this he may have been Kant's inferior as a poet, but he was his superior as a philosopher.

§ 95. The next question is, What rule of duty is

imposed by the moral reason? It is one thing to determine that there is a moral law so far as this is implied in the reality of the practical reason, and another to determine what this law requires, or what is its import. This question Kant proposes, and labors earnestly to answer. He is also clearly aware that it is a question which moralists of all the schools have labored earnestly to answer, some saying, Do that which will make you perfect or happy, or that which will accord with human nature, or that which will please God. Indeed, it is with the answers to this question that all theories of morals are chiefly concerned. The answer which Kant gives is simply: That conduct is right which when accepted as a maxim, *i.e.*, an accepted or working rule, is fit to be universal. In other words, universality or universal fitness (*for what* is not said) is the one criterion which should test every moral law. The application of this criterion, as we have seen, is illustrated by several supposed cases. But all of these supposed cases are not only varied examples of adaptation to an end, but of an adaptation to an end which is presumed to be naturally good, involving as *the* or as *a* fundamental relation, that of adaptation to natural well-being as an end or law. If it were urged that Kant's criterion, as

Kant's Objective Rule of Duty.

he insists, involved nothing which is worthy to be called *matter*, then the principle would be merely *formal*, as he contends it ought to be—and this, the identical proposition that like every fundamental or original axiomatic criterion it should be universally applicable. This, as we have seen, would be a very safe but a very useless proposition, which would impart no information and be exposed to no denial.

§ 96. The next element of moral quality which requires attention is *good or ill-desert*.
 The practical reason, according to Kant, ^{Good and} ^{Ill-desert ac-}
 not merely commands to duty, but it ^{cording to} ^{Kant and}
 teaches or declares that the obedient ^{Butler.} will is deserving of good as a reward. While the authority of its command can in no sense be possibly derived from the natural good which lies beneath or follows after the virtuous act that is required, yet if this command is obeyed, the conclusion follows with equal positiveness, that the obedient act and the obedient man deserve only good. In this way do we gain our completed conception of the *summum bonum* as including, *first*, the good will, which is itself the supreme and ultimate good which is to be followed for its own sake and obeyed for its autoeratic authority, and *next*, the reward which it merits, which completes the circle

of possible blessings as involving every kind of good that is conceivable, *i.e.*, the *summum bonum*. No reason is given for this connection of natural with moral good as its reward. Its propriety with its consequent authority, according to Kant, is to be accepted as an ultimate fact.

In this doctrine Kant also reminds us of Butler, when *he* says, "Our sense or discernment of actions as morally good or evil, implies in it a sense or discernment of them as of good or ill-desert" (Diss. II.); "Upon considering them or viewing together our notion of vice and of misery, there results a third, that of ill-desert." These judgments, like the others, according to Butler, are not, as was taught by Kant, original and inexplicable, but "Our perception of vice and ill-desert arises from and is the result of *a comparison of actions with the nature and capacities of the agent*." By what process or on what grounds he would connect the two, or what is involved subjectively or objectively in the act of comparison is not explained by Butler. Nor is this necessary for our purposes. It is enough that we notice that he grounds the connection of the two upon the consideration of the end for which the moral being exists, and to which his powers are adapted; in other words, that the relation of good

or ill-desert is derived from the relation of fitness or suitableness to the end or intention or idea of nature, and is not, as is held by Kant, an original or axiomatic truth of the practical or moral reason. In other words, so far as good or ill-desert is concerned, Butler derives the concept of moral from that of natural good, which Kant so positively repudiates, both in form and in fact.

§ 97. The will, as related to the practical reason, according to Kant, is the capacity in man to determine himself to action by the apprehension of the laws which the reason ^{Kant's} imposes. ^{Doctrine of Freedom.} So far as this will is not determined by any of the natural impulses of the sensibility, but obeys the behests of the practical reason, it is called free, *i.e.*, free from sense or material motives. Yet in being free from these laws it accepts and obeys the moral law.

Natural law, however, it should be remembered, pertains only to *phenomena*, and not to *things in themselves*. It is apprehended of and enforced upon phenomena as they occur under the form of time, in order to make experience possible. On the other hand, the power to accept and, so to speak, to enforce moral law, pertains to *things in themselves*, or *noumena*, of which causative power is affirmed,

but not relations of time. Through the practical reason we reach reality, the *Ding an sich*, the Ego, or the soul, the nature and reality of which we have previously striven in vain to discover. This reality, however, is not given directly to conscious experience or intuition, but it is given *impliedly* so far, and so far only, as reality is involved in the moral law. We do not assert freedom as a positive endowment of which we are immediately conscious, but we discern freedom as logically involved in the conscious fact of obligation. We do not say, *I can*, therefore *I ought*, to choose so and so. *i.e.*, to exercise or assert my freedom, but *I ought, therefore I can*.

We are reminded here of the familiar lines of Emerson, which were doubtless inspired by some of the memorable and spirit-stirring utterances of Kant:

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'
The youth replies, 'I can.'"

The meaning of the poet, at first thought, seems to be obvious, but on a second reading the question might still arise, whether he did not after all have a glimmering reference to the Kantian interpretation,

and find in its paradox a poetic mystery. Some would say the more paradoxical the statement the more profound the truth. But on second thought most readers will find in its stirring appeal the utterance of the most solid of truths, that of a sense of inward power aroused by the trumpet call of duty.

It should be observed that the will is also called by Kant the practical reason, because the truth which it assumes and enforces is the moral law, involving the idea of duty, which this will acknowledges by its subjective assent to its authority, even when it disobeys its commands. This moral law with its objective authority, moreover, is distinguished from a mere maxim of the will, which may be defined as any special rule which is in fact accepted by the individual man for himself, and which may be more or less completely conformed to this comprehensive rule or law. (*Cf.* § 57.)

§ 98. Freedom as the ground of responsibility is only applicable to the noumenon or thing-in-itself, it being excluded from phenomena by the fact that these only obey the law of causation. And yet Kant inconsistently contends that causation can connect the noumenon with phenomena for the reason that being one of the categories, it may be applied to phenomena as such;

Freedom
in the Ego
Noumenon.

overlooking, as it would seem, that it is only between phenomenon and phenomenon that any of the categories apply. In this way he finds no incompatibility between necessary law and supersensible freedom. By the same rule he distinguishes between a permanent or timeless character and a permanent moral state, regarded as the product of will. He goes so far as to affirm that, given a man's character, every act of his could be predicted as the certain and necessary effect of his permanent moral character or state; while yet for this character man himself is responsible, because as a noumenon he is its originator.* The freedom for which Kant contends in any such application is obviously a conception entirely different from that which he had defined as responsive to the imperative of reason, and therefore the negative of an impulse of sense, and in that sense free; it being a positive function which is recognized as the ground of personal responsibility, and finds its warrant in that direct consciousness which Kant usually treats with supercilious disdain.

The *intelligible character* of the noumenon Ego, as thus explained, is also used by Kant as the basis and explanation of that characteristic disposition to

* Cf. Kant's *Lehre von der Freiheit*, etc., von Dr. Carl Gerhard. Heidelberg: Georg Weiss. 1885.

moral evil which he recognizes as one of the conspicuous facts of human nature, and which forms the subject of a special essay entitled, "Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der Reinen Vernunft." In this essay he finds in his ethical theory a naturalistic or physiological explanation of the theological doctrine of man's natural sinfulness or depravity, finding in the reluctance of the sensibility toward the good the ground for the sense of obligation, as elsewhere explained.* (Cf. §§ 25, 31, 38, 61, 69.)

* Dr. Kurd Lasswitz (*Die Lehre Kants von der Idealität des Raumes und der Zeit, etc.*, Berlin: 1883, §§ 51-54) distinguishes the *I* or *Ego* as first the determining agent of all its products or states, and second as the determined product of its own activities. To the first *Ego* neither the categories nor the time and space-forms have any application. The second is two-fold, consisting of the self-conscious *Ego* as known in its several states and objects — its individual thoughts, feelings, desires and resolves — and the objects given by sense-perception. Both the last are objects of experience, i.e., whether events or beings, the experiences of consciousness or sense-perception, and both obey the law of necessity. All that pertains to the *Ego* as a state or phenomenon, i.e., as a thought, or feeling, or conclusion, obeys the law of causation as truly as do those agents which we call physical or material, including as it does the entire realm of determined psychical experience. Behind and beneath this is the self-determined *Ego*, which by an activity of its own originates the individual moral self that appears in consciousness as a determined force, and gives character to all that consciousness takes note of. The ingenious author insists that Kant in this way intended to provide for two noumena in the *Ego* — the real, active, self-determining *Ego* of moral freedom, and the second, which is the complex, or content, of those objects and relations which constitute experience and are given in consciousness. Of the first only can freedom be affirmed; over the last the law of necessity prevails.

The distinction is apparently valid, and has been recognized by others. Cf. Alfred Hölder: *Darstellung der Kantschen Erkenntnistheorie*, Tübingen, 1874, pp. 60-61. Cf. N. Porter: *The Human Intellect*, §§ 86, 96.

§ 100. We notice next the relations of Kant's ethics to his speculative philosophy. As we have seen, in the soul's knowledge of its own freedom is involved the discernment of noumena or things in themselves, as contrasted with phenomena or events as they appear. Through the knowledge of itself as free it breaks the shell of appearances, which follow one after another, and, so to speak, depend on one another after the laws of nature; and knows itself, the Ego, as a thing-in-itself. It, moreover, knows itself as a cause producing phenomenal effects of its own, yet without disturbing the chain or connection of those causes and effects which follow one another according to natural laws. Its knowledge of the Ego does not, however, involve an insight into its constitution or endowment as a thing in itself, but only as capable of free origination, and this so far only as the moral law implies this power, its exercise, and its products. With the capacity to respond to this law, personality is implied, and a possible community of persons and aims or ends of activity which are harmonious with one another. Such a community or kingdom of aims or ends was implied indeed in the statement or definition previously given by Kant of the matter of the moral law as a law which is fit to be universal.

Relation of Kant's Ethics to Speculative Truth.

But fitness implies adaptation to an end, and the capacity for harmony between the ends of each individual, as also a harmony with and subordination to the highest end of each and all.

It appears from all this that the practical reason in the Kantian system alone gives us reality or things in themselves, so far as to justify some knowledge of the soul as a noumenon. The moral law which enforces duty by its command asserts the reality of the Ego as a fact, the nature of which and the law of which it knows only by those phenomena or conscious experiences in which the soul makes itself manifest as an ethical force.

§ 101. It also establishes the soul's immortality, by the behests of the practical reason. Ethical The categorical imperative is not only a ^{Grounds for} Belief in command that the soul should obey the ^{Immortality} moral law, wherein are implied its freedom and its actual existence, but it insists that the obedient soul shall be made happy simply because it so requires, and therefore assumes that the soul deserves to become so. So long as it feels obligation it is under the dominion of sensibility, and consequently there must ensue a constant strife between the higher law of duty and the lower or emotional impulses of sense and passion. So long as this struggle

continues, it will fail to attain that happiness which the practical reason—the supreme arbiter—pronounces that it deserves. But if it deserves this it surely will attain it, because the practical reason commands it. But if it shall attain a complete harmony between resisting impulse and imperative law, it must *continue to exist* and consequently for all practical purposes it must be immortal and indestructible, *i.e.*, superior to any of those natural laws which control or effect those changes in phenomena which occur in time.

If the practical reason requires or commands that the soul should continue to exist, it by the same rule demands that *God should exist*, in order that its own behests concerning the rewards which goodness deserves should in fact be accomplished through Him. Thus, by an ethical necessity, the *reality of certain noumena* or things in themselves and their more important relations are established, so far, at least, as the practical concerns of man require. At the same time the contrast is indicated and justified between man's absolute ignorance of things in themselves, on the one hand, with the exceptions provided for, and the progressive yet limited knowledge which he attains of their relations and phenomena under natural laws, on the other.

§ 102. To the brief summary which we have given of the leading principles of Kant's ethical system, we subjoin the following Further Remarks upon the Categorical Imperative. critical remarks and queries. The first which we select is the *categorical imperative* which is enforced and assented to by the *practical reason*, as an essential attribute, property, or element of the moral law. This is held by Kant to be original and simple and comparable in this respect to any one of those mathematical relations or concepts which we recognize as original. It is also capable of eliciting emotions, or one, at least, viz.: that of esteem or respect. The discerned relation of authority is on the one side, and the felt emotion of obligation is on the other. To the recognition of either of these elements as original, whether the objective or the subjective, we object that they are unique, and therefore require an extraordinary claim upon our confidence. This claim they are so far from justifying, through their use in explaining "human experience," that they contradict the analogies of this experience, while the phenomena for which they are required can be satisfactorily explained by being resolved into other elements. We cannot conceive of a mere *thought* or *judgment* of moral import, whether in the general or the individual form, like

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor," or, "Thou shalt relieve the hunger of A or B," that is capable of being self-enforced and thus invested with moral authority. The conception of authority seems wholly disparate with or unrelated to any mere thought or judgment, or any hypostasized rational or intellectual entity.

§ 103. We accept the axiom as self-evident that "obligation supposes an obliger," as an analytic or axiomatic proposition, because the word and the thought suppose a *person commanding and a person responding*, with the correlate emotion of constraint. It would seem to follow that the relation and the feeling it evokes can belong only to one person as set over against another, and under any conditions that might evoke reverence or fear by command or direction. For this reason it is held by a recent writer, Dr. James Martineau,* that these cannot exist or hold except of man as in contact with his fellow-man or as subject to God's command. But man is not only a political and a religious animal, he maintains an economy of organization and rule within himself. By his capacity for self-consciousness or reflection he can give law to himself as truly as, and far more completely than, he

*On the Relation between Ethics and Religion. London: 1882.
Cf. Types of Ethical Theory. London: 1885.

can give law to others. He can obey or disobey himself, and reward or punish himself with his own complacence or displacecy, and therefore can hold or bind himself to the feelings and acts which he acknowledges to be right or wrong. It is only as we remember that man is endowed with consciousness; and that consciousness can be thus intensified into reflection; and that man as self-conscious is thereby capable of proposing and imposing ideal ends and laws for himself as voluntary, as truly as for others; and that he can respond to these ideals and laws by his freely choosing will, and can also reflect upon his choices and decide upon their conformity or nonconformity to the law self-imposed, and can reward or punish himself by his own approval or condemnation — it is only as we remember all these facts and relations that we can explain obligation and authority in their highest significance, with the correlative emotions of reverence and constraint. These emphatically moral relations are emphatically personal relationships. They are incapable of existing where personality is wanting, and are capable of existing in their highest and most perfect form only where personal relations are most energetic and intense. These facts and relations of human experience are not denied by Kant. They are most distinctly recognized by him so soon

as they come prominently into his field of view. At a late period of his inquiries he defines a person as one who is an end to and within himself, and founds on this definition his doctrine of human rights, when he faces the doctrine of rights; but he overlooks personality altogether in his formal exposition of moral obligation and authority, and the categorical imperative. In the exposition of his ethical theory and the practical reason he loses sight of the significance of personality, with its individual will, its reflecting reason, and its interpreting power, and only comes back to it after having asked leave of the practical reason to justify his belief in the reality of this noumenon within his breast. (*Cf.* § 72.)

§ 103. If now it can be made good that the relation of authority itself, with its attendant emotion, can be derived from and re-derived, solved into and explained by other known endowments of man's nature, it follows that, neither as intellectually apprehended nor as emotionally responded to, can it be accepted as an original relation or ultimate experience. We mean, of course, when we use language with any claim or effort for scientific exactness. We know that as a poetic metaphor or an imaginative expression, such a representation may be both significant and satisfying; but for this very

reason it may be the more misleading when there is any danger of its being mistaken for analytic or exact terminology. If by the practical reason we are understood to mean the reflective reason when it confronts voluntary activities, there can be no objection to such an application of the term. But if the categorical imperative is made to describe a constraining force over the feelings or will, which is supposed to be emitted or to proceed from an intellectual judgment or proposition, instead of the activity of a living personality, then we cannot but call it a metaphor and treat it as such.

§ 104. We prefer our own solution to the Kantian,—if the latter deserves to be called an explanation, and not a mere figure of speech,—because it refers us to known human endowments which cannot be denied, and recognizes their familiar activity and their universal prevalence, and because it fully explains a problem which the Kantian theory does not attempt to solve, but declares to be inexplicable, and which it then proceeds to envelop in a cloud of imposing imagery, and to speed on the winged words of a soaring poetic diction. Our solution holds fast to the authority of the moral reason and the moral law, as recognized by both Kant and Butler. So far as Butler

The Two
Explanations
Contrasted.

recognizes simple authority as the distinctive attribute of the moral reason or the moral nature in the way of personification, without any explanation of the natural endowments which make it possible, so far is he fairly open to criticism. So far as he resolves the possession and use of this authority into the nature of man as a reflective and voluntary being, so far does he make his theory rational.

Another unique feature which remains to be noticed in Kant's conception of obligation, is that he conditions it entirely on the supposed resistance, reaction, or reluctance of the passions and emotions of the sentient soul. So long as a struggle arises between the reluctant passions and the imperative reason—not, be it observed, between the lower and higher emotions, for such a distinction is not admitted by Kant, but between feeling and authority—then, and only then, obligation will be felt. When the passions are all at rest in perfected harmony, then a state of holiness ensues, as contrasted with a condition of reluctant but obedient virtue, and then obligation ceases to be felt or known. "The perfected spirits of the just," according to Kant, have no sense or experience of obligation. A paradoxical statement, like this, can only be accounted for by the necessities of a one-sided theory.

§ 105. The next point to be considered is Kant's conception and attempted definition of the moral law. The practical reason, according to Kant, confronts the will with the categorical imperative. It authoritatively commands the will, but to do or to be what? If it meets the will which, whatever it may be, is certainly a power to do or become something, what does it propose that it be or do? Whether it be in the general command, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, or in the concrete, Thou shalt will or give him food, there must be a definite kind of feeling or doing proposed or commanded. What is this command? This question has often been asked, and each answer represents a separate theory in ethics. To this question, as we have seen, Kant gives no answer except the mere formal rule, See that your law be universal, or fit to be universal—that is, that it admit no exception—when it comes to be applied. What Kant means by this criterion he illustrates by the four oft-repeated suppositions of temptation to personal degradation, to suicide, to an idle and self-indulgent life, and to falsehood. We have seen that in every one of these cases this unfitness to be universal is exemplified by the tendency of the conduct to hinder or mar human well-being. This, Kant would say, is a mere accident of the

Kant's
Explanation
of the
Moral Law.

matter, with which we have nothing to do. It is only with the actual necessity that the law should be universal that he is concerned, not at all with the fact that the act should always conduce to human well-being. If this be so, then it is the fact that the rule admits no exception; that is, it is its formal universality alone which gives it its binding force. But mere universality, as such, when separated from universal results of blessing, would invest the law with no moral authority. Rather would it be the farther removed from such dignity, the more manifest it became that, in its tendency to natural evil, it was consistent with itself. Does not Milton truly tell us:

“ * * * devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds; men only disagree.”

The actual universality of a law, or the universal approval of the same, can only be interpreted as the evidence of its manifest tendency to promote the well-being of those whom it concerns. It is strange, indeed, that an eye usually so acute as was Kant's should fail to penetrate so thin a disguise.

The examples selected by Kant, as explained by himself, show that so far as the content of the moral law is concerned, in each of the instances supposed, it has solely to do with its bearing on human well-being. Kant does not seem to be aware of this fact;

for not only are these the only examples which he quotes, but they are repeated by him again and again, in order to make clear what he thinks of the content of the moral law, and the reasons for its being of universal obligation. Considerations of this sort constitute and exhaust his entire repertory of reasons.

§ 106. This is very remarkable when considered in connection with his constantly repeated assertion that the nature of man can never, as the ancients taught us, explain the content of the moral law, this being transient matter, the product of arbitrary conditions, and therefore inferior to *the eternal forms of things*, which are supposed to be incapable of change and dissolution. Kindred to this was the assertion, which we shall have occasion to consider, that feeling, as such, and anything which excites feeling, is transient and unstable matter, and therefore incapable of being the element or ground of any rule of duty. The untenableness and the inconsistency of Kant's strictures upon the derivation of the moral law from the constitution of human nature, and upon the definition by the Aristotelian and Stoic schools of virtue as a life according to nature, and their rule of duty as derived from the nature of things in general,

together with the dishonor which he puts upon feeling as an uncertain and unstable element in the construction of any ethical system, are eminently characteristic of his theory, and are continually presenting themselves in one form or another, as stones of stumbling to the ingenuous mind.

§ 107. Kant's doctrine of the will and of freedom is obscure and unsatisfactory. It is clear only so far as it is negative. Freedom is a condition opposed to that of being bound by natural laws, viz : those laws which govern phenomena and which are assumed *a priori* to be necessary in order to make experience possible. In contrast with the dominion of these laws, it is asserted that the will is free; or rather it is concluded that it must be free for the reason that man ought to obey the moral law. The fact or truth of freedom is not known by conscious intuition. Indeed no positive activity is asserted of choice or selection of one of two conflicting objects or between conflicting natural impulses. The belief in freedom, whatever it may be, is in no sense direct and immediate. It is uniformly held as an inference from another fact or truth. The proposition which expresses our faith is, We ought, therefore we can. The truth that *we ought* comes first and the truth that *we can*

comes last, as implied and enforced by the categorical imperative of the practical reason. We know that we can in knowing that we ought. But why or how, we are not informed. It is pointedly denied, however, that we are *conscious* that we are naturally or morally free.

That there neither is nor can be any incompatibility between freedom and necessity is urged by Kant, and reasoned by him on the ground that necessity pertains to phenomena, while freedom can belong only to noumena. We interpret phenomena by causal relations under natural laws, in order to make experience possible, that is, in order to explain the past and adapt ourselves to the future. We interpret freedom of noumena as being something more and possibly exempt from natural laws, even though we conceive of them as causal in their activity within the world of phenomena. But while we know this truth because the exigencies of the moral law force it upon our assent, this is all that we know. We are constrained by the reality of freedom, and accept it as trustworthy simply because it is essential to the assent which we cannot deny to the authority of the categorical imperative.

The critic of Kant does not find it very difficult to urge that Kant's axiom, *we ought, therefore we can*,

is an analytic or identical proposition, asserting that as the ground of our conviction of the fact of obligation, there is involved the discernment of the fact of freedom. The circumstance that Kant is never consciously responsible for any psychological, as distinguished from a metaphysical, analysis, does not make it any the less difficult to suppose that he may mistake the one for the other. But of this more in another place.

§ 108. That Kant does scant justice to the range and import of those truths which self-consciousness attests is still more strikingly manifest from his scant recognition of *end or design* as an element of personality and a condition of moral obligation. Freedom implies a choice of a supreme end when recognized as fitted and designed to control free action, personal emotion, and individual activity. This implies that a rational universe supposes a harmony to be possible between the best acts of its constituent members, and the best acts and results of all acting together. In the enumeration of the categories of the pure or the practical reason we find no distinct recognition of this fundamental relation as such, and consequently no provision for the use of the same in the analysis or explanation of scientific or

Kant's Late and Inadequate Recognition of Purpose.

ethical truth. Consequently it is not surprising that we find this relation nowhere recognized by Kant as furnishing the explanation of the authority of the moral law over the personal will.

We contend that the end for which one or more forces or agencies exist, especially if it controls the combined or conspiring activity of many others, is rightly conceived as exercising authority over all these forces, and acting as a lawgiver and law-enforcer for them all. If we find any form of natural good appearing to control unconscious existence or instinctive action, it is regarded as invested with authority and imposing the necessity of obedience. If it is consciously recognized as fit to control the actions and results of one who obeys and disobeys its behests, it is conceived as his ruler, which will not be trifled with, as exercising a mastery which is none the less an object of reverence even if the power which it evokes is blind. If a man offends against his own nature, *i.e.*, his own living self, as represented by the purpose which is the law for his being as to its best possible achievements, he acknowledges its right to command when he feels its power to condemn and punish. If he attains any just idea of the excellence of the good (the natural good) which he might have achieved, and the badness of the loss which he

has incurred, he invests such a purpose with authority over his will as supreme, having a sacredness which can be compared with no other. But in order that these experiences may be possible these psychological and metaphysical elements must be recognized and applied. Kant fails in both, and consequently fails in the explanation of attaining a good or satisfactory theory of the most important of ethical experiences, that of moral obligation. As if to atone for his failure, he substitutes for it a figment of the poetic imagination, which he invests with the borrowed drapery of factitious disinterestedness, doing violence at the same time to the most sacred and inextinguishable of human aspirations, the realization of its highest natural capacities of desire and impulse, and displacing the rights of the supreme reason by the pretended claims of a blind imperative which owns no allegiance to the nature of man, but authoritatively issues its unreasoned demands, in response to which it requires an unemotional and an unreasoning will.

§ 109. It is not to be wondered at that in the logical and natural consequence of this double defect—subjectively in respect to freedom, and objectively in respect to purpose—Kant should fail to recognize the ethical

Kant's Failure
to do Justice
to Personality.

significance of *personality*. In psychology he knows no other Ego than a noumenon capable of the sole function of reverently responding to an irrational moral law, the authority of which it blindly respects and freely though reluctantly follows, while in science it is known by its reflex in a synthetic apperception of the unity which it imparts to the objects of knowledge. The self conscious Ego, as a choosing and loving being which knows its powers and possibilities by its self-conscious judgment, and proposes aims to itself which it imposes as laws; which, as will, chooses or refuses the good which is made possible by its capacities; and which by these, as standards, measures and judges its acts and attainments—of all this he knows nothing as the foundation of his ethical conceptions or emotions, but, instead thereof, gives us the dry scaffolding of a merely logical hypostasis which he illuminates with the weird light of fantastic illustrations.

When he approaches the sphere of concrete realities and touches the realm of the actual, it is not surprising that he recognizes the importance and significance of personality; especially when he treats of the doctrine of human rights in his *Metaphysik der Sitten*.

§ 110. Kant's dogmatic *depreciation of the*

emotions in his ethical theory is open to the most decided criticism. From the beginning to the end of his expositions he excludes any recognition of the sensibilities in Sensibility. His Depreciation of the Emotions and the faculty or manifestation, for the comprehensive reason that they are necessarily changeable with the individual, and consequently are incapable of any fixed relationships which involve permanent and universal worth. In this general position, which is constantly assumed or asserted, Kant overlooks two considerations; *the first* that the sensibilities *as such* are no matter of ethical valuation or authority, but only the sensibilities as energized and regulated by the will. It is not the positive strength of any or all of the passions, as a natural or a hereditary endowment, nor the relative intensity or energy of any one when thus estimated, which is praise- or blame-worthy, but it is the positive strength of one or the relative energy of many as the expression of the individual will, that constitutes character, and is the object of ethical approval or condemnation. While it is true, as Kant contends, that sensibility or emotion, as such, is involuntary, accidental, and arbitrary, and subject to all manner of caprices, it is equally true that the emotions as volitionized are susceptible of constant relations with an

ever-varying material, and that under an endless variety of energy and activity there may be constancy of proportion under the controlling energy of the central will. Man's natural sensibilities of every sort, his responsive loves and hatreds, his sympathies and antipathies, seem as changeable and capricious as the lawless wind; but whenever and so far as they meet in conflict and measure their claims by the highest possibilities of human nature, so far do they admit a standard, a law, a sentence and its execution: in other words, so far do they provide for moral relations, making them both possible and necessary. *The second* consideration overlooked by Kant is, that the will without sensibility is incapable of stimulating or directing activity, lacking, as it does, any material to regulate, and the motives which might give life to the moral purposes, and warmth and energy to the inner life. Kant's will, without feeling, is simply a capacity for responding to duty and inspiring to outward action by demand of the reason, without involving the emotions. The responses of such impulses must consequently be colorless and cold. Should the affections glow with saintly or seraphic ardor, with self-sacrificing benevolence or heroic self-control, so far as the devotee of duty finds in his conscious delight in the exercise of

any, even the highest sensibilities, an animating impulse or a ground of satisfaction, as contradistinguished from the simple imperative of the moral law, so far, according to Kant, would the morality of his motives be weakened and dishonored, and the purity of his affections be soiled and smirched. Moreover, he teaches that a command to love, or to exercise or indulge any emotion, is absurd in the eye of reason, which could issue in no moral result were it obeyed. The categorical imperative, he tells us, requires acts, not feelings, for with feelings it despairs to concern itself. It would seem when love becomes most pure, according to Kant's own theory, that it is no longer an activity of reluctant duty, but an inspiration of aspiring holiness, but at that instant it ceases to have any properly moral quality, because it is swallowed up in an afflatus of emotional sympathy. So far, too, as its subjective aspects are concerned, the form of virtue which Kant would sanction and cultivate is manifestly apathetic and unsympathizing. It is stoical rather than humane, self-relying rather than benevolent; if it is self-governed and just, it is cold and hard. From what we learn of Kant's personal character and his domestic education, we are confirmed in the conclusion which would be suggested by his speculative

system, that his own *morale* was chiefly concerned with acts rather than with feelings, at the same time that it was severe in its principles and uncompromising in its requirements. His speculative and practical views, as it would seem, were also largely affected by his antagonism to the fanatical emotionalism of Rousseau, who was in his eyes the representative of speculative and practical sentimentalism, and very naturally found little favor with the expounder of the categorical imperative and the practical reason. It is beyond dispute or question that Kant was the expounder and representative of an entirely different practical theory, and it seems equally obvious that the reaction which he represented was equally extreme in the opposite direction from Rousseau. Nature, however, will have her revenges, and so we observe that Kant does not always succeed in overlooking or eliminating the element of feeling. He is too honest and logical to the truth of human experience entirely to overlook the *Achtung*, or esteem for the law, which he confesses is conspicuous in human experience, although he strives to square it with his theory by denying that it is properly an emotion at all. The elevating and self-satisfied peace of a good man he was too true to nature to deny or overlook, and yet the dominant spirit of his

system was sharply and strongly antagonistic to feeling or emotion of any kind, either as a speculative or practical element.

§ 111. We notice *the intellectual services* to which The Intellectual Application of Kant's Ethics have been applied. We have already adverted to the importance which Kant claimed for his practical as a supplement to the speculative reason. We have also stated the course of thought by which he made it to command the soul on its allegiance to duty to accept such truths as the existence and immortality of the soul and the being of God. Such positive and extraordinary claims for experiences so commanding are imposing by reason of the confidence with which they are urged and the importance of the truths which they are supposed to make axiomatic. That the demands of duty extend to the use which we make of the intellect in its search for truth is most obvious, and that the fidelity with which we respond to these claims often determines the results cannot be denied. But it does not follow that the occasion for the interposition of the so-called practical reason is precisely what Kant represents it to be, or that the method by which it supplies the needs of the speculative reason is that which his theory of its nature supposes.

§ 112. First of all there is, we conceive, a subtle but fascinating haziness in the conceptions of Kant and many other schools in respect to the evidence, authority, and trustworthiness of *experience*, especially in our ethical activities. That is a simple haziness of thought, if it be not sometimes a mystic dogmatism, which conceives of experimental and ethical knowledge as in its nature more positive and satisfying simply because it is unlike the ordinary processes of the intellect when applied to other than matters of faith and duty. When it is said in common life that experience will test ethical truth as nothing else besides, or when it is declared that the honest conscience decides many a sophistical doctrine to be incredible, however plausible and unanswerable it may seem to be; when it is said by Kant that it is in order that experience may be possible that we are forced to accept and assert as *a priori* the forms of sense, the categories of the understanding, and the ideas of the reason, we assume that the knowledge given and tested by experience must be trustworthy, not directly because of its practical importance, but rather because men will not trust the interests of their daily and personal life to any other than to such satisfying evidence as is sun-clear and sun-bright. It certainly

Authority
of Experience
in Ethical
Questions.

cannot be good logic or good sense to reason simply that because men must live, or gain any other good, therefore the knowledge which they must accept in order to live must always be reliable, and that for this reason the relations of time and space and the other *a priori* conditions of experience must in some sense be trustworthy. And yet it may be both good logic and good sense to reason that our confidence in any knowledge which is actually trusted in experience must be as clear and as self-evident as the light. On the other hand, it may be true that to the practical appeal, *Il faut vivre*, the reply is sometimes pertinent, *Je n'en vois pas la nécessité*.

Similarly, it sounds very satisfactory to say that the practical reason of the conscience requires that we believe in freedom, immortality, and God, because the moral law commands us so to believe, and to rest on the acceptance of this *ignara ratio*, that we must discern facts or relations to be true, because otherwise faith, and duty, and hope, would be impossible. But this is the logic of Kant, and it is by buttresses of this sort, if his meaning is rightly interpreted, that he would support what he thinks to be the tottering pillars of faith and conscience. That when opposed to the analysis of speculation, Kant's ethical fervor has often been effective, when re-cast and re-inter-

preted by the unreflecting good sense of many readers, we do not deny. That he has often been a most effective assertor of the speculative and practical authority of moral truth and religious verity, we do not deny, but that this renders any the more trustworthy his uncalled-for concessions of the limitations of the speculative reason, and his equally unauthorized extension of the functions of the practical reason, we do not believe to be true. Notwithstanding the fervor of his assertions of the authority of ethical and his occasionally eloquent expositions of spiritual truth, it may be seriously questioned whether the honeycombed scepticism of his speculative theory has not occasioned unmeasurably greater mischief than his magniloquent and occasionally really eloquent utterances for freedom and immortality and God have been able to prevent or to cure.

There cannot be the least objection to the trial of every system of philosophical truth by ethical tests, provided these tests are legitimately applied, but to assume that there are two kinds of evidence which have no common foundation and which require a different or an irreconcileable logic, the so-called logic of the intellect and the logic of the conscience, is to accept a fundamental logic which will be found to be

irreconcilable with either science or faith. In the reasonings which we have employed in this treatise, from the practical features and tendencies of Kant's own system, to its speculative weakness or truth, we constantly assume that what is speculatively true will commend itself as such to the unsophisticated common sense and permanent convictions of mankind, especially when these are tested by the trying exigencies of practical life, because we believe that all ethical and spiritual convictions stand on definite and discernible speculative foundations.

This truth may suggest the last topic of criticism, which is none other than the relations of Kant's ethical and speculative system to the Christian ethics and to theistic and Christian truth.

§ 113. The Christian ethics are characteristically severe, uncompromising, and authoritative, on the one hand, while they are singularly sympathetic and tolerant, charitable and humane, on the other. The Kantian ethics are certainly no more elevated in their practical ideals than are the Christian; assuredly they are no more positive in asserting the authority of the moral law. We may perhaps concede that the two systems in spirit and requirements are equally rigorous and uncompromising. But in respect to the

gentler and the more sympathetic affections, they scarcely belong to the same family. Emotion in all its forms is the very soul of the Christian system. Feeling is the consummate flower of Christian virtue in all its varied hues of tenderness and sympathy. In the theory of Kant sensibility has no place, except a place of weakness and inferiority. It never is recognized as capable of being strengthened and hardened by the will, while in the Christian system, if emotion be wanting, whether in its severer or its gentler forms, its absence is considered a sign of special defect. The tolerance and forgiveness of Christian virtue is scarcely provided for by Kant's speculative theory or his practical rules. Marcus Aurelius is immeasurably more Christian in the characteristically Christian emotions than is the unsympathizing Kant, who is always stern, though sometimes sublime in his rigid severity. So far as he relaxes at all from the rigor of his ethical tone, he is either evaporated into an imaginative sentimentalism which rises above the range of human sympathies, or is crystallized into a rigid stoicism which prides itself on its formal perfection. For any practical application to the affairs of common life, his teachings and spirit are singularly unfitted, and for this reason his ethics have been known and practised chiefly among the

ranks of the artificially cultivated, while the Christian moralities have been most distinctly recognized and most effectually honored and most consistently practised in the homes and societies of practical men, who have been schooled to the ethics of common sense, by the trials and conflicts of ordinary life.

§ 114. The relations of the Kantian ethics to theistic and Christian truth should not be overlooked. In the ethics of Kant, God is a scientific necessity, whose presence in the moral universe is required, that He may bestow upon the virtuous the reward which they deserve for their obedience to the moral law. Inasmuch as the practical reason not only commands obedience, but pronounces that the obedient will deserves to be made sensitively happy, some agent or agency is required to execute its behests, and therefore God is demanded and accepted by the faith of men. Inasmuch, however, as the good which He bestows is sentient good, and this in the Kantian system is inferior to moral good, the relative place which the Supreme holds in His own universe is by necessity a secondary and inferior one. He is artificially and awkwardly attached to the practical reason, as a marshal or sheriff, in order to enforce the moral law, and cannot but suffer in the respect of those who believe in

Relations to Theistic and Christian Truth.

Him, by reason of this single function, for which alone He is made necessary to their faith. His entire administration must consequently be weakened in its acts and its functions by the circumstance that it addresses the hopes and fears of men, in place of their conscience and moral will, inasmuch as the Kantian estimate of the emotional nature places it out of all relation to the conscience, and degrades the motives which it addresses to man's sensibility to a confessedly inferior authority. Hence the natural theism of Kant, which at first aspect seems to be exalted to the highest supremacy over man, even to the judgment seat of the conscience, and consequently to stand on the firmest foundations, is practically and fatally weakened by this practical antagonism between duty and sensibility. The same weakness makes itself more manifest when the Kantian ethics encounters the Christian system in its supernatural Personage, with His miraculous doings and His authoritative commands, with His personal affections, His promised rewards, and His threatened displeasure. While Kant affects no secrecy, and is chargeable with no affectation in the homage which he renders to Christ as the embodied ideal of moral perfection, as both the example and the inspirer of the ethical life of Christendom, he at

the same time treats His claims as the personal ruler of the world's life as did Herod of old, investing the rightful Lord of the moral universe with a robe of mockery, and putting into his hands an idle sceptre. The Christian history he is compelled by the stress of his ethical system to hold to be impossible, or needless, or unscientific. While as a symbol the Christian history is worthy of all respect, yet as a supernatural fact it is impossible, needless, or mercenary. As a revelation it is simply impossible, because the ideas and truths which it professes to impart cannot be communicated unless the elements are already in the possession of those to whom it claims to make them known. If these elements are already present, they cannot be enforced by supernatural authority, inasmuch as their natural and independent energy cannot be increased by any extraneous additions. The axiomatically ethical and spiritual truth which is slumbering in every man's conscience must be left to be developed, sooner or later, by natural agencies, under the operation of existing laws. This revelation is also useless. If adequate agencies exist, the faith in the moral economy which pervades the universe forces us to believe that no supernatural interposition will be furnished when natural appliances suffice. It is also demoralizing

when contrasted with higher and purer influences. All conceivable supernatural influences, in the Kantian judgment, address the personal sensibility and appeal to the pathological emotions. Interesting as these may be, and practically effective in the actual affairs of men, when ethically judged they must be relegated to a lower plane than those which the practical reason presents when it addresses man's autonomous will. Indeed, properly speaking, these influences have no ethical value, but are simply auxiliary to impressions that have no place within the moral in men. If not always anti-ethical, they are at least unethical. The personal character of the Great Exemplar, though it incarnated the ideal of human excellence, and so far is transcendently elevating, gains nothing in purely ethical force by being real, but rather loses, inasmuch as it blends with the purely ethical the personal, which appeals to the affections rather than to the conscience, and moves upon the self-centred impulses rather than the simple sense of duty. Whatever may be urged in support of the supernatural power of the supernatural Christ can in no sense be recognized among the highest influences, but must be conceded to human weakness, and to the temporary predominance of inferior impulses.

Kant does indeed find a great ethical truth in the

perversion of human nature, and in the predominance and persistence of those lower impulses which inwardly struggle against the law of duty, and make the sense of obligation so potent and so fearful. But he holds this tenet rather as a myth which illustrates what he conceives to be a subjective ethical truth, than as having any other significance, while the sacred history of redemption from this moral depravity is to him only a mythic parable, made up of the sensuous drapery of those great moral verities which give it its interest and its power.

No fact is more notorious, and none more significant, than that the Kantian Ethics have been a significant and oftentimes a destructive element, whether confessed or unconscious, in the many philosophical and historical arguments which have been urged against supernatural Christianity. It may be added that the theory of ethics which does not need a personal Deity to enforce the law of duty, because the law of duty is self-sufficing, or which rejects Him because, forsooth, His efficient authority must address man's sensibility to the personal favor or displeasure of his moral ruler, cannot but labor under a heavy burden of disadvantage when it aspires to a faith in a personal Father in Heaven, or the supernatural Christ, by whom God is manifested to man through

human affections and human sympathies, in order to lift him to that moral perfection which reveals itself as the ideal of every human soul that finds in the end of its being the law of duty, and in its adjusted and purified sensibilities the realization of that blessedness which is the true spiritual life.

CHAPTER V.

BRIEF NOTICES FROM EMINENT GERMAN CRITICS.

§ 116. It does not fall within the plan of this essay to trace the fortunes of Kant's ethical theory in Germany, or to exhibit the criticisms which it has received from the several schools in philosophy which in that country have succeeded one another so rapidly during the present century. Each one of these schools has given more or less attention to ethics, but no one of them has given such prominence to ethical relations as has Kant. Certainly no one has sought as he did to make ethical truth the foundation of speculative philosophy. On the other hand, each one of these eminent leaders of philosophical opinion made ethics subservient to his special philosophy, making the practical to sit at the feet of the speculative reason. While ethics has been held in unfeigned honor in all the modern schools, she has never ventured to speak with such positive authority through the categorical imperative, or to stand as sponsor for every species of phi-

losophical truth as she has done in the school of Kant. It was not without an occasional earnest protest to the contrary that this was done in Kant's own time. We give the impassioned language of Schiller as an example of the response which Kant's extreme onesidedness called forth from one of his earnest admirers, and also as explaining the mischievous practical reaction which was occasioned by Kant's dogmatic extremes:

§ 117. "In Kant's moral philosophy the idea of duty is represented with a harshness which frightened away all the gentler graces of life, and might easily tempt a weak understanding to seek for moral perfection in the way of a gloomy and monkish asceticism. However earnestly the great philosopher may have sought to guard himself against such a misrepresentation, which to his free and noble spirit must have been most offensive, he has yet given occasion for it by the forcible and striking contrast between the antagonistic principles, which he represents as contending for the mastery of the human will. In respect to the truth of his theory there can be no question among thinking men after the arguments which he has urged, and I scarcely know how one would not sooner give up his manhood than adopt

Schiller's
Comments on
Kant's Ethics.

any other conclusion than his. And yet, purely as he proceeded to his task as an inquiry for the truth, and satisfactorily as he conducted his argument upon objective grounds, he still appears to me to have been influenced by certain subjective reasons, which, as I think, are easily explained by the circumstances of his times.

"The morality of his times as he found it, in both theory and practice, must have outraged him, on the one hand, by the gross sensualism of its practices, and by the unworthy readiness of its philosophers to sanction this corruption by their lax theories. On the other hand, a scarcely less objectionable principle of perfectibility aroused his opposition, which, in order to realize an abstract idea of universal perfection, was by no means scrupulous in the selection of the means. For these reasons he directed the most cogent of his arguments toward the points where the danger was most imminent and the reform was most needed, and made it at once a solemn obligation to attack sensuality, as well when with brazen front it outraged all moral feeling as when it assumed that imposing garb of high moral aims in which a certain enthusiastic party spirit knew how to array it. For it should be remembered that he had not ignorance to instruct, but perverseness to reprove

and reclaim. The cure demanded rebuke, not flattery or persuasion, and the more striking was the contrast which the truth presented to current maxims, the more could he hope to arouse his age to reflection. He became the *Draco* of his time, because his time was not worthy of a *Solon*, or capable of receiving him. From the sanctuary of pure reason he brought forth the moral law at once so little known and yet so well known, held it up in its austere sanctity before a degraded generation, and cared not to ask whether it had eyes which could not endure the brightness of its purity.

"But in what had the children of the household offended so grievously that Kant cared only for the servants? Because impure inclinations had usurped the name of virtue, must the most disinterested affections in the noblest hearts be brought under suspicion? Because the moral weakling would interpret the law of reason with a laxness which makes it a plaything at his convenience, ought it for this reason to be invested with a rigidity so extreme as would only change the vigorous expression of moral freedom into a more honorable form of bondage? Has not the truly moral man a freer choice between self-esteem and self-contempt than the slave of sense has between pleasure and pain? Is there in

the one case any less constraint for the pure will than in the other for the will that is corrupt? Must humanity itself be indicted and degraded by the imperative form of the moral law, and must the noblest assertion of its greatness become the most abject confession of its weakness? Should not this form of command have precluded the impression that the obligation which man imposes on himself as a rational being, and which for this very reason alone is binding on himself, is reconcilable with his feeling of freedom, and for this reason should it not have avoided the appearance of a foreign and positive command, an appearance which by the radical inclination to act against the same, that is charged upon man, could with difficulty be set aside? * * *

“Human nature is, in fact, a more closely compacted whole than it is permitted to philosophers to allow it to appear, who seem to be unable to accomplish anything except by the process of dissection. Never again can the reason reject, as unworthy of itself, those affections which the heart confesses with joy, and which every man cannot but exalt in his own esteem, even when he is himself morally degraded. Were the emotional nature uniformly the depressed and never the coöperative agency, how could it bring the fire of its own emo-

tions even to that triumph which is celebrated over itself? How could it be so active a participant in the conscious experience of the pure spirit if it were not so intimately interwoven with the same that even the analytical understanding cannot, without violence, sunder the two? The will, moreover, has a more immediate connection with the capacity for emotion than with that for knowledge, and it were often most unfortunate if in every case it must first adjust itself to the pure reason."—*Über Anmuth und Würde*.*

We have given these extracts from Schiller because they furnish a vivid and a truthful representation of the impression which Kant's theory made upon an ar-

* Of this criticism of Schiller, Julius Müller pertinently remarks: "It will in any event remain as an example of a memorable error of a noble mind that Kant could maintain that true virtue has nothing to do with sympathizing benevolence toward man, or with the interest of the feelings in man's welfare, and can only manifest itself in its purity when it is attended by no pleasure in the object of our will. And yet these consequences cannot be avoided if the essence of morality is derived only from esteem for the moral law, and for the reason that this law bears the formal characteristic of universal validity. Schiller's treatise, *Über Anmuth und Würde*, so far as it protests against this rigor which petrifies the moral life, gives expression to the aspirations of Christian truth; but in so far as it will not give up the general principles of the Kantian moral law it is incapable of holding fast to those truths, or of escaping a conflict with itself. An example of this is furnished in its singular complaint against Kant's morality, that by the imperative form of the moral law (for the very reason that it is a law asserting authority over freedom) humanity itself is held to be degraded." *Die Christliche Lehre von der Sünde. Erstes Buch, Erste Abtheilung, Zweites Kapitel*.

dent admirer, who was yet an independent critic. While Schiller did not attempt to refute Kant's metaphysical analyses, he was convinced there was some error in his practical conclusions, and indeed in the actual working of his entire ethical theory. The revolt of his feelings against this theory was shared by a very large proportion of the brilliant writers who followed one another so rapidly, among whom Goethe was as conspicuous for his philosophical insight as for his wondrous imagination. That Kant should have failed to convince this brilliant galaxy of imaginative writers, who, while they were overpowered by the acuteness and strength of his logic, and dared not venture to meet him in the arena of metaphysics, were yet confident that his analyses must be either defective or false, goes very far to prove that his ethics, though practically his strongest point, was in some particulars seriously defective, and especially for its stoical contempt of the sensibilities. That Kant was animated by the noblest purposes in his ethical teachings was freely confessed by those who, like Schiller, were at once his critics and admirers. That the extremest of his one-sided paradoxes may admit of a qualified interpretation which exalts them into important practical truths may be acknowledged without hesitation by

those who reject them the more positively because they see in them an incongruous alternation of imaginative flights into the empyrean of inspiring truth and of patient mining along the dark and winding passages of bewildering metaphysics.

§ 117. The fact has already been adverted to, that, with one or two important exceptions, the theory of ethics has attracted much less attention since the days of Kant, as a part of speculative philosophy, and least of all has it been recognized, as it was by Kant, as furnishing to speculative truth its sole and solid foundation. While each of the great systems, as of J. G. Fichte, Schelling, Herbart, and Hegel, has found as ample a place for ethics in terms of reason or thought, as did Kant, no one of these writers like him has made it the cornerstone of our confidence in speculative truth, or invested its dicta with supreme authority. To Schleiermacher belongs the distinction of producing an original system, which was derived from or adjusted to the characteristic philosophy or dialectic which was peculiar to himself. This dialectic we have no space to describe, nor would it be easy to do so. We speak of his ethics only as dissenting from the ethics of Kant, in that it does not limit its sphere to the imperative of duty as

such, but divides it into three distinct departments, the doctrine of *duties*, or obligatory acts; of *virtues*, or of ethical dispositions: and of *habits*, or confirmed character. That this classification must rest on a broader psychological and philosophical basis than Kant's practical reason, with its categorical imperative and its autonomous will, is too obvious to require any illustration. Both Schleiermacher and Herbart notoriously differ from Kant in their recognition of the sensibilities as a prime factor in the ethical experiences and judgments of man.

Hermann Lotze is another example of a writer of competent knowledge, profound insight, and impartial judgment, from whose *Microcosmus*, B. V., Chap. V., § 3, we give the following, observing that in this connection he also notices one or two conspicuous features of the later ethical systems:

“* * * There is no doubt something to praise in the austerity with which practical philosophy has sought to free moral precepts from an indirect reference to the personal interest of the agent; but this austerity was wrong in seeking to undo the plain and indissoluble connection between the notion of pleasure—despised, and in most of its applications despicable—and the notion of worth in general. When Kant believed that he had found a

universal formula for moral action, in opposition to the aims of self-interest, he was candid enough to admit that he had not discovered in it the precise ground of its binding authority over us. And why, in fact, do we consider it as a matter of course that the maxims of our action must fit into a general system of law? And which are the maxims which do not thus fit in? Plainly those which, if generally followed, would produce general disorder and the frustration of all effort. But what is this acknowledgment of the importance of order, and of the possibility of carrying out our intention, if it is not either (1) a grand and comprehensive utilitarian principle taking the place of special and narrower ones, or (2) the confession that maxims different from those demanded would lead to general misery, and are, therefore, to be rejected? Other systems, while eschewing all pleasure, assure us that the moral law is the one important thing; that the relation of a finite being to the absolute, like that of any point of the periphery to its centre, is a relation of subordination; that human will runs parallel to the development of the infinite idea, and works for it. But how if the absolute should not desire such a relation? If the submission of the periphery caused only vexation to the centre, could it be still maintained that

this relation was, notwithstanding, to be maintained as unconditionally worthy in itself?

“This question should remind us that the sacredness of the command depends upon the will of the Supreme Being, upon His capacity of receiving pleasure or pain from our obedience or disobedience, and upon that relation of ourselves to Him, in virtue of which we find our own blessedness in His pleasure. If we eliminate from our conception of the Supreme Being every trace of feeling, and transform our conception into that of inflexible physical force, a power which, though intelligent, is devoid of feeling, we see at once that the subordination above referred to is altogether without worth. * * *

“What is the meaning of saying that there may be certain relations between different wills, which merit unconditional approbation? Is such a relation to be found anywhere in the world? Are there anywhere wills which, apart from all feeling, actually exist, and can enter into relation with one another? And if it were so—if the world consisted of beings that were merely intellectual and volitional, and of which none, whether finite or infinite, could anyhow or at any time be capable of feeling pain or pleasure, in such a case what could be the significance of those ideals of action which then would have no one

by whom they could be approved? As a matter of fact, would it be an absolute moral requirement that one existing condition, which caused neither pain nor pleasure to anyone, should be replaced by another condition which would likewise produce no increase of well-being to anyone in the world? Must we believe that the universe is so taken up with ceremony that it is concerned with nothing but the realization of formal conditions? The too stern morality to which we have referred may easily conceal from itself these final results, the transformation of all moral action into, as it were, a mere mechanical putting together: for certainly no one is likely to set up individual moral laws in which there does not lurk some hidden reference to the pleasure which is so much despised; in other departments of life these extreme consequences do occasionally appear."

§ 118. One of the most significant criticisms of Kant's theory from a philosopher of a ^{Trendelenburg's} modern German school has been furnished by the late eminent Adolf ^{Strictures on Kant.} Trendelenburg, of Berlin. It may be found in his *Historische Beiträge zur Philosophie*, Dritter Band, Berlin, 1867. The title of the essay is, *Der Widerstreit zwischen Kant und Aristoteles in der Ethik*.

The first point which the author makes is, that while Kant urges acute objections against those philosophers who would derive the principles of ethics from an analysis of human nature, he altogether omits the peculiar form in which this analysis is applied by Aristotle. Whereas Aristotle has recognized the inner purpose or end which controls and explains the constitution of man and the activities to which it is destined as its highest and best use, Kant only conceives of this as some external result or achievement, activity, or skill, to which it may be trained. Trendelenburg notices in passing that in order to discover this supreme aim or purpose of man's being or constitution, Aristotle would have us resort to psychology, which Kant would reject as involving the study of matter as distinguished from form, the accidental rather than the essential, and therefore as unscientific.

Next, Kant insists that all material practical principles must carry us over to the doctrine of self-love or separate, *i.e.*, individual, happiness. This general assertion is met by Trendelenburg with the general denial, that to found our principle in the matter or constitution of man does not necessarily involve the founding it in separate happiness or the so-called principle of self-love. It is the necessary relation

of a morally good or right action to the realization of the end of our being which enables us to exalt this ideal into a principle which becomes controlling and supreme. That its relations to the highest happiness may be the medium by which we discern the activity for which we are destined he concedes, but that happiness is properly the end, he denies, but would say the action indicated by the relative happiness which it gives is such an end and becomes a law. In brief, he dissents from Kant in his interpretation of Aristotle, as to his estimate of the psychological study of man's nature as the ground of an ethical system, as to his judgment of the relation of the formal to the real, and as to his recognition of purpose and design as essential to the interpretation of the nature of man, and of man's highest or true happiness as the indication of the highest and best activity, and as, consequently, the revealer and enforcer of the moral law.

These principles are more distinctly and fully developed in the second part of the essay, from which we give the following:

First of all, the author notices that, inasmuch as pleasure (*die Lust*), being the spring of the individual life, tends to selfishness, while the *good*, the bond of the common life, seeks the general well-

being, subordinating to it the individual interest, the mutual relation of the two necessarily becomes of the utmost ethical importance.

After sundry historical and critical notices, he adds that pleasure, ever varied and changeable, cannot for this reason be a guide in action and in life. Neither the highest scale of mere enjoyment, as such, nor any separate good, can serve as a guide or impulse to the general good. Consequently the good will must renounce all separate or selfish good as its end or rule. But it does not follow from this that the good will has no pleasure. Rather, over against selfish good is set its esteem for the law, as that which opposes selfish good, its pleasure being intellectual in its occasion. Moreover, this esteem for the law being general, and not individual in its occasion, is not a transient feeling, but permanent in its experience, a *disposition* which cannot be content with single actions, but is a permanent state of the will.

It also involves a superior object of love; for the disposition and will are not cold abstractions, but living activities, which are fixed on commanding objects of good. In such a condition of the soul, impulse and end, a good will and good actions, correspond; pure pleasure in the good becomes the constant characteristic of the good disposition.

The good man delights in the law of God after the inward man. In the good disposition character consists; and if character is energetic, it will have pleasure in its principle.

It follows from this analysis that pleasure is at once repelled and embraced; repelled as a ground, and yet retained as a characteristic of virtue. We cannot reconcile the difficulty by making the good man selfish in his virtuous joys. We rather resort to the organic conception of nature and man, after which one result or aim serves an end or aim still higher than itself, and so on, the highest of all giving law to all which is below. In the highest of all we find the *categorical shall*, which at last is found to proceed from a will, *i.e.*, if one follows on from the conditioned to the unconditioned, and at last encounters a person. Here we meet the highest for man in the universe of thought and will—the man asserting *I ought*, the man responding *I will*.

When we come back to the relations of pleasure or happiness to these experiences, and ask for the place which it holds, we find that it is a generic term, and covers or includes a great variety of very *unlike experiences*, so unlike as to accept or endure with difficulty any common appellation, yet all having in common, a tendency to some special activity,

which tends in some way to the development or upholding of man. In the two forms of pleasure and pain are indicated the furtherance or hindrance of the individual life. So far as pleasure and pain look beyond, to their respective ends, these experiences are secondary and the accomplishment of the end is primary. In animals they are limited to the individual well-being. But in ethics and with man we go farther; we widen our conceptions so as to include the common life. Personality and the state are recognized, also the higher pleasures of art and science and the divine in man.

The moral training of the will consists in learning to find pleasure and pain in those activities and objects which are befitting. Let no man think that such a discipline can be achieved by the exclusion of pleasure. The springs of action are wanting to the will if the man does not embark in it his inmost life, and does not find his pleasures from moral living; not that he should be active for the sake of pleasure, but should embark his inmost self, without ceasing, in the good.

These extracts from writers who are no longer living will be sufficient for our purpose. The number of able critics in Germany who continue to

discuss Kant's ethical theory seems likely to increase rather than to be diminished. The fascination which brings each new generation to his feet to listen to his teachings — either to accept or reject them — seems of late to be intensified rather than to be weakened. In one way or other, Kant seems likely to continue to stimulate and to instruct the ablest thinkers of the present day. The author of this critical examination of his ethical system yields to no one in his estimate of Kant's superior genius and his quickening power. At the same time he is profoundly of the opinion that the critical philosophy, in order to exert its best influence, needs to be thoroughly interpreted, and critically discerned.

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